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Anarchism and the Wider Left

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CONTENTS

Foreword	page 1
Introduction	page 3
Early History	page 5
Anarchism Begins to Take Form	page 8
Bakunin	page 9
Kropotkin	page 10
Endnote	page 14
Anarchism Grows	page 15
Tolstoi, Thoreau & Religious Anarchists	page 15
Contrasting Nineteenth Century Traditions	page 21
Nihilism	page 23
The Origins of Syndicalism	page 25
Arbeite Franti, Modern Schools & Malatesta	page 34
Dissident Trotskyism	page 39
Anarchist Opposition within the Russian Revolution:	
Makhno & Kronstadt	page 42
Councillism & Others	page 46
Goldman & Berkmann	page 52
Platformists	page 56
Reich	page 58
The Frankfurt Group	page 59
Editor's Note	page 61

FOREWORD

Basic Analysis

The 'free' world is not free: the 'communist' world is not communist. We reject both. One is inequitable and becoming totalitarian. The other is already totalitarian and growing inequitable.

Their lust for ever-greater growth and profits and their current power struggle imperil the survival of the world.

They ravage the land, water and air and recklessly pour out harmful waste products, poisoning land, water and air and they destroy whole species of wildlife.

They keep the world divided and constantly on the brink of atomic war in order to divert the attention of their subjects from their own condition, this even though they know that it only needs one failure of machines or men to make the destruction of the human race inevitable.

Both systems rest on, and encourage for their own purposes, such evil divisions within humanity as nationalism, racism and sexism.

We charge that both systems engender servitude. 'Freedom' based on economic slavery can never be truly free, as force or deception is necessary to maintain the power of the rich. 'Communism' that has room for political slavery cannot be a society of equals and co-operation.

A glance at the power blocks in which the two systems are embodied will confirm that those limits on freedom, as on communism, are no more theoretical abstractions but living realities.

The monopoly of power that is the state must be eliminated. Government itself (as well as its underlying institutions) perpetuate war, oppression corruption and misery.

Aim

While all genuine resistance to power blocks is welcome and praiseworthy, ultimately, the evils of the twin existing systems will only be overcome by mass action against both. By resistance, we mean that which is not merely designed to substitute one system of exploitation for the other and which does not rest on the assumption that *"if only the people who exploit our part of the world would go and negotiate with those who exploit the other part, all would be well"*.

Anarchists advocate a worldwide society of equals organising themselves through communities and councils based on co-operation and free agreement from the bottom - federation instead of domination and coercion from the top (centralism). Regimentation of people must be replaced by regulation of things. Anarchism is free communism.

Methods

An anarchist system can only be attained when the vast majority of the population consciously reject both the existing systems (and the various mixtures of the two that characterise third world states) and actively set about changing society.

The anarchist movement has, it is true, always owed much to committed and heroic comrades who, by their search for a co-operative lifestyle, have done much to promote our cause. But the movement as a whole has always held that such lifestyle politics, however ascetic the style embraced, is, nevertheless, a luxury for the few and unattainable for the many.

Anarchism as a movement does not therefore see in such individualist heroism as the sole – or even the main – road to freedom.

It is impossible to provide a precise blueprint of how the majority, when it decides to build a free communistic society, will act. Obviously if the mass of the people are going to decide to change society and do it freely, the methods they use cannot be laid down in advance by a small minority.

However, history provides examples of three forms of mass struggle used by people attempting their own liberation. Each were used in different parts of the world in different conditions which, at their best, were based on true rank and file democracy and achieved significant results, making no compromises with the state or old forms of privilege. Thus, they were not merely the road to power for new ruling elites, unlike most other forms of action, and they are:

- syndicalism
- council communism
- mass civil disobedience

INTRODUCTION

Firstly, I need to give my thanks to comrades from Wrekin Stop War who edited this pamphlet. I generally write off the top of my head and if I take time to quote and name sources, I become totally unreadable. At the very least, I would be unlikely to find any one source of whom I was never going to be critical and my sentences become more and more convoluted (each sentence with at least one parenthesis and each parenthesis with its own internal digressions).

To be at my best, I need to write to a very tight deadline, as for PYAG in the late 1950s and the SWF in the early 1960s. During the course of an evening meeting, it would be decided that we needed 1,000 words on one topic or another - that evening. I would be sent into the next room (PYAG) or the pub down the road (SWF) to produce the draft. I was usually given half an hour and on occasions, I would write on three or four topics in an evening. Even then, the group edited it but an editor becomes even more essential when I vary from that format!

What makes some of the comrades who have edited this pamphlet different is that the whole work started with me trying to explain anarchism to them. We had met within the Telford Stop the War Coalition were annoyed with the leadership and so opted out to form a separate, independent group.

As some of us were anarchists, others wanted to know with whom they were working. This therefore started out as an attempt to explain to peace activist comrades why I call myself an anarchist. I wrote and handed over the first half of this pamphlet on that basis but by then, they had met other anarchists, looked on the Internet and Wrekin Stop War, our independent peace group, had affiliated with the Northern Anarchist Network. I didn't see any point in carrying on with the pamphlet but, a year or so later, they persuaded me to finish it (and then undertook the job of editing it).

The best definition of anarchism ever written appeared in the Eleventh Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Not surprising the Encyclopaedia editor was Peter Kropotkin and it is unlikely that any one will ever write a definition to compare with his. Freedom reprinted it some forty years back and I believe it is now available on various net-web-sites.[1]

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[1] Editor's Footnote:
See http://recollectionbooks.com/siml/library/anarchismEncyBrit.htm

Early History

In the ancient Greek city-states, the Archons were a select caste (half judge/half priest), some of whom were to be found in most states (whether republics or monarchies). They performed the role of a modern constitutional court and were able to decide whether any law or decree conformed to the basic Hellenic moral and constitutional code.

The prefix 'a' or 'an' in Greek means not/non/without, thus, if a city decided that it did not need archons, (and in the days of Classical Greece, most did) it was said to be anarchic. It didn't then denote a very far-going revolution, although undoubtedly the archons had been a conservative force and it was a beginning.

Even in those days, it was not unusual for people who were excluded from the top rank of society, but who were still privileged, to want to make revolutions to put themselves in supreme power. They would (as their successors do) appeal to the deprived masses for support, painting a wondrous picture of how society could be reformed on a basis of justice.

Then, as now, when power changes, the attitude of the new rulers to the masses changed. Nowadays (and for the last thousand years or so) when the rank and file persist in demanding the equality they were promised after their quondam leaders have called off the struggle, they are called anarchists (though in Classical Greece they were called isocrats, which means egalitarian).

Language evolves and later, when archons were generally either abolished or so much reduced in power that people no longer felt a need to abolish them, the word anarchist came to imply without any government. I don't think anyone knows where and when the transformation came that explains why, in Latin Western Europe, 'anarchist', rather than 'isocrat', became the accepted dismissive term for those who wished to see revolutionaries fulfil their initial promises.

There were examples throughout Medieval Europe and in Reformation times. In the German Reformation, the initial reformers gave power to the princes that they had taken from the Empire and then called a halt. The Anabaptists found the reforms they were given irrelevant and struck out for something different but it was the fear that they had the ear of the peasant masses, those 'anarchic hordes', which led to them being brutally put down.

Curiously, in England, things got turned round and after the Pilgrimage of Grace, aristocratic Catholics were for the most part allowed to emigrate. Catholicism came to be by and large the religion of peasants or unskilled workers and so, in Spenser's *Fairie Queen,* the giant Anarchy is painted as a Catholic force.

Likewise, in the French Revolution, the *'sans-culottes'* (poor) agitators who didn't accept the détentes that Robespierre and other respectable middle class revolutionaries reached (where the privileges of the professional classes were maintained) were described as anarchists.

Amongst admirers of Jacobinism outside France there were groups that sprang up - though at times only briefly retaining their revolutionary views - whose writings were decidedly what we would now regard as anarchist. In this country, the most famous were the Pantisocrats – a group round William Godwin and Mary Wolstonecroft to which at one time Wordsworth, Shelley and Coleridge belonged.

Thus, it was not surprising that, when the Socialist Movement was born in the nineteenth century, a wing was dismissed as anarchist. Most people know that Marx denounced many of the founders of socialism as 'utopians'. The term meant that people like Saint Simon, Robert Owen and Louis Blanc had no clear idea how their ideas could be implemented. They might make appeals to fellow capitalists (on occasions to Napoleon III) to finance socialist experiments, so they didn't see it as a class movement.

It is not so widely known that Marx also denounced an opposite wing of the movement, even though many of its members had been until then his most ardent supporters.

Marx decreed that it was necessary for the workers' movement to seize the state and use the state to transform society. The danger with this is that although those who are put in power will be drawn from the working class, they will then be isolated by that power from their class. Such is the nature of power (particularly state power) that they will inevitably come to mistake their own interests for those of their class. Those who so argued believed Marx was being inconsistent, as the whole weight of his own theoretical system testified to the danger of putting a minority in that sort of power. It was, they argued, 'utopian' to suggest that a government, however proletarian in origin, would remain socialist.

These Marx denounced as anarchists and when it looked as if the majority of the International would side with them, he staged a coup - suddenly moving the international secretariat from London to New York without consulting the elected council. The International split.

The division was not as clear-cut as it later became. This was, after all, not the only place where Marx was not entirely consistent.

On the one hand, it is perfectly possible to argue (*cf* Daniel De Leon, Anton Pannekoek, some members of the SPGB or Maximillien Rubel) that Marx didn't really mean a state. On the other, Bakunin, the most prominent 'anarchist' involved in the debate, was not totally against the concept of a workers' state. He merely believed that the particular proposals Marx was making would be autocratic and bureaucratic.

Mind you, nor were the divisions between utopians and either Marxists or anarchists as hard and fast as is normally assumed.

Moses Hess is variously categorized as a utopian or a proto-Marxist; Marx's *Communist Manifesto* was the last of a series of rewrites (the original author was John Francis Bray, who is frequently described as a utopian); and Proudhon veered rapidly back and forth between anarchism and utopianism.

The whole issue is complicated for us, not just by the fact that Marx spoke German, but also that he was - first and foremost - a Hegelian and that he used some words in what seem a peculiar Hegelian sense. This means that the two most widely known quotes from Marx about the state are both misunderstood.

As every Tory and Stalinist will tell you (and, with qualifications, every social democrat and Trot) Marx called for the *"dictatorship of the proletariat",* except that he didn't. He called for the *"diktat of the proletariat"* and diktat was, for the Greeks, the underlying constitutional and moral code on which a state's law and political system were based.[2] The diktat of the proletariat would be more accurately translated as the predominance [culturally, legally and economically] of the proletariat.

On the other hand, as any Leninist in a moment of conscience will tell you, Marx believed in *"the withering away of the state"*, except that he didn't.

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[2] Preserving the diktat was why archons were needed.

The word used means (in Hegelian terms) the assertion or emphasis of a concept or entity to the point where it is transcended, i.e. it is so dominant that no one any longer doubts or disputes it and it is therefore, no longer relevant.

Anarchism Begins to Take Form

A little before the Paris Commune (two-thirds the way through the nineteenth century) a movement arose as a wing of the international socialist movement, called (by its critics) 'anarchism'. Its members at that time did not use the term but referred to themselves by terms such as 'libertarian communist'.

This movement advocated socialism without the state or, at least, since there were considerable differences amongst members, with less state rule than Marx proposed.

This embryonic anarchist movement gained numerical support and much inspiration from Swiss watchmakers. It was traditional for Swiss watchmaking to done on a co-operative basis; payment being shared according to need rather than according to skills or length of time worked. The republican conditions of Switzerland had allowed co-operatives to emerge uncorrupted by feudal relations and they had survived, relatively untouched by the growth of capitalist relationships.

The idea that traditional co-operatives could set the pattern for a socialist society was of course looked at askance by Marx. It was held to contradict the Marxist insistence that socialism can only arise where capitalism has already created a society of abundance. The debate was deepened when Bakunin argued that despite Tsarism and the power of the Russian nobility, the Mir [village communities] had survived in many parts of Russia and could play a role in a future construction of a socialist society. Marx denounced the idea as utopian but later changed his mind after finding that there were number of people in Russia who professed themselves Marxist and believed in the socialist potential of the Mir. (There is some dispute as to whether he changed his mind yet again later).

This fledgling movement gained a surprising amount of support. For a time Garibaldi professed himself anarchist, which meant that anarchism was to have significant support in Italy and South America.

The development of the Spanish radical movement was such that when Guillaume went to see if there were any potential supporters, he was astounded to find the trade union sections of a relatively large 'federalist' republican party eagerly awaiting him, with the request that they might join the movement.

Bakunin

Bakunin started his time as a socialist as a Marxist.[3] Even when he later reacted against Marx, his Marxist past reasserted itself, so that one clear element in his thinking was Marxist. As I've said earlier he came to view Marx's concept of the workers' state as being authoritarian but he was not, at first, against the state on principle (he suggested a revolutionary people's state).

It is hard to untangle his subsequent development. It was distorted by association with Nchaev, who probably published some bloodthirsty and macabre manifestos fraudulently in Bakunin's name.[4] There was, however, a tradition stemming from this fraud/collaboration that believed anarchism could be achieved by assassination and which advocated enlisting gangsters to the anarchist cause. Provided that we can justly disentangle Bakunin from Nchaev, we are left with a number of areas of criticism of Marx.

First and foremost, Bakunin viewed Marxism as inherently bureaucratic, and (possibly reacting to Marx's hatred of Slavs) he identified the bureaucracy in Marx with Germanic ways of organization and thought. By the same token, he reacted against Marx's insistence that his socialism was scientific. Scientists he said, would become in the future the new priesthood, having the same power over ordinary [wo]men's minds, as did the mediaeval priesthood.

Secondly, though he had started by seeing revolution as coming from the industrial working class, he reacted against Marx's presumption that the peasantry was always right wing.

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[3] He had previously been a Slavophile and the anecdotes that Marxists later told to discredit him generally describe his Slavophile days. He was chosen by Marx to translate *Capital,* although he never finished it.

[4] It is not certain that they were fraudulent and Bakunin's enemies allege that Bakunin, after later changing his mind, excused himself by claiming that he had been unaware of what Nchaev was doing.

It should be pointed out that Russian serfs were only freed during the lives of Marx and Bakunin and most Russian peasants were therefore rather different from the Rhineland ones Marx would have observed. Bakunin had seen peasants (not merely in Russia) taking part in revolutionary struggles and so could not share Marx's dismissive attitude.

Thirdly, whereas Marx dismissed *"the lumpen proletariat"* (the elements below the proletariat), there is no clear definition of who constituted such elements. There is debate as to whether Marx included the unemployed and unemployable, the unskilled and the disabled when saying that from their ranks scabs and police agents are recruited. Bakunin was again not prepared to be so dismissive and later in reaction, he tended to argue that some Marx dismissed as lumpen were so because they rejected the values of society and therefore were sub-consciously revolutionary.

As I said above, anarchism was then a label attached by its opponents not what the anarchists called themselves and, while Bakunin was respected, there was no uniformity as to how these anarchists did describe themselves. It was only when Kropotkin looked back at the Greek term and saw the use of the word anarchist to mean without government (and was associated with isocratic) that the label was adopted.

Kropotkin

Kropotkin is perhaps less well known than other revolutionary writers, largely because in 1914 he supported (at least in part) the Allies in the Great War (World War I). This shocked his closest associates, who felt it contradicted everything he had written and said. There was a revolt on Freedom (a paper he had founded, financing it from the money he was paid for his work on the Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Consequently, to this day, those who admire his writing and the fact that (in marked contrast to Marx) although he could earn large sums as an encyclopaedia editor, he passed all but a labourer's wage over to the movement, still shun his tradition.[5]

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[5] Kropotkin lived as a worker amongst workers whilst Marx had a large annual sum as dowry from his in-laws (large enough by itself to have put him, income-wise, in the top 1% in England) and a second such annual sum from Engels. As a columnist in the New York Herald Tribune (whose editor, Horace Greeley, was a Marxist) he received a salary of similar size. So, whilst writing his revolutionary works, be lived the life of one of the richest.

It would be hard to find clearer arguments for anarchism than are to be found in *Mutual Aid*, *Fields Farms & Workshops* and *The Conquest of Bread.* The aforementioned encyclopaedia definition of anarchism is frequently reprinted, as is his masterly work showing the danger in 'revolutionary' government but still, few anarchists refer to themselves as Kropotkinist without some embarrassment. And yet, there is a discernible theoretical tradition, distinct from other versions of anarchism, which merits the term.

Perhaps, on balance, this is a good thing. After all, in contrast to Marx's followers, we've never regarded his writings as unchallengeable.

Kropotkin was a polymath.[6] He came from a princely family, was a child genius and, before he started getting himself imprisoned as a radical, he had been responsible for a geographical survey of Siberia[7]. He contributed extensively to the survey, his articles won international academic acclaim and he picked up a raft of degrees.[8]

After prison and Siberian exile he escaped to the West staying for a time with Elysée Réclus in Switzerland.

Réclus (and his elder brother) had, as teenagers, been banished from France for continuing to preach socialism in the post-Commune days. They worked as farm hands in Ireland and the USA (pioneering modern geographical and anthropological studies in the latter). He was able to re-introduce Kropotkin to American and other academics in the discipline, who had been unaware that the writer of the earlier Siberian studies was still alive. They had assumed that the years in which Kropotkin had not published were due to death, not imprisonment.

As anthropologists, both Réclus and Kropotkin had published studies of peoples, then generally regarded as primitive – Réclus in North America, Kropotkin in Siberia. Both reaching conclusions regarding the natural way humans relate to each other, both within the limited area we think of as the family, clan or tribe and amongst such groups and their neighbours. Another such, quoted by Marx and De Leon, was Lewis Morgan.

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[6] This is why he was asked to edit the encyclopaedia and he was able, using about a dozen pen-names, to write about half the articles.

[7] Geography was then widely interpreted to include geology, zoology and anthropology.

[8] Kropotkin biographer, Brian Morris, tells me that Kropotkin never submitted his doctoral dissertation, although it was completed.

It was the days when Huxley and Spencer were arguing the case for capitalist-like relationships based on 'survival of the fittest' but the evidence from Wallace and Darwin's upon which survival of the fittest was based was as to the species fittest to compete with other species. It by no means necessarily followed that a species, driven by internal competition and conflict, would be fittest to compete with a rival species. Eventually they went beyond this showing from Wallace and Darwin (as well as from their own observations) that, even as between species in the animal world, it was not always true that competition led to survival and successful expansion. They showed that underlying slave-based, imperial rule (as under feudalism) there were impulses to co-operation and that when, as often happened, power-rule broke down under its own contradictions, these co-operative instincts asserted themselves.

He left no complete body of dogma to compare with Marx's and although he did talk of his socialism as scientific, he insisted that the methodology, which Marxists claimed was the only scientific way of looking at society, bore no resemblance to the "scientific-method" used in the physical sciences.

No doubt the fact that he didn't make such a claim stemmed in large part from having qualifications in two or three scientific disciplines. Perhaps he didn't have the inflated regard for science, evinced by Marx.

Though he left no full theoretical corpus in the sense that Marx did, Kropotkin did provide an historical framework to match the corpus of anthropological examples of anarchist practise; finding throughout history writers who could fairly be seen as precursors of anarchism. It was also Kropotkin who pointed out how the writings of Tolstoi and Thoreau[9], not previously seen as relating to anarchism, were, in fact, of direct relevance to anarchism.

He stayed with Réclus long enough to convalesce from his treatment in Tsarist Russia (and to write enough to reintroduce himself to the academic world) but Kropotkin had no intention of living the life of an academic. He moved first to an industrial part of Paris, where he launched an anarchist paper and then moved to London's East End.

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[9] People would have said that their individualist moralism made them irrelevant to a form of socialism.

It should be noted, however, that on coming to London, Kropotkin avoided any close contact with some traditions, one anarchist and others very nearly such, which were already established in Britain:

The Socialist League had been founded two years before. One of the constituent groups was the Labour Emancipation League which, although originally confined to the East End of London (and with an appeal to continental immigrants, who had taken part in revolutionary struggles in their own countries) had spread out elsewhere, causing the authorities some worry. This, in turn, meant police agents were sent into the League as agent provocateurs.[10]

The records of the LEL and its associate groups are not sufficient to say much about the views of their members but it is probably fair to see it as being directly in the Bakunian tradition.

The League itself (as it is widely known) was founded by William Morris in 1884, as a breakaway from Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation. Initially it had the support of Engels the Avelings (Marx's daughter and son in law) but they went back to the SDF in 1886 (the year that Kropotkin arrived). A Marxist faction around Belfort Bax remained within the League.

The League had also, at its founding, attracted libertarian Christian-socialists (the Guild of St Mathew) who followed Father Stewart Headlam but he left in 1887. It is not recorded as to why and his latest biographer makes no mention of his period in the League.[11]

Curiously, Kropotkin never had anything to do with the League. When he was coming from Paris, William Morris had invited him to join and he offered to fund *Freedom* and *Commonweal* (the League's paper). Kropotkin had known Hyndman before, so although he cannot have had sympathy for the latter's politics maybe he wanted to avoid siding with the League. Morris too left the League, though he still funded *Commonweal* as a second anarchist paper.[12]

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[10] Historians still argue about the case of the Walsall Anarchists.

[11] There must have been quite a few leaving in 1887. Years later both George Lansbury and Fred Jowett (when challenged that some act hardly fitted their parliamentary character) replied by pointing out that they had been in the SL until 1887.

[12] William Rosetti's daughters also launched *The Torch* as a more popular version of Freedom, with Oscar Wilde as its star writer. This was initially hand-written but after a time was printed on the same press as Commonweal (at 6 Doughty Street).

Chapter I – Endnote

I have neglected to say anything about Herzen, who edited *The Bell* from Paris (an anarchist paper aimed at opposing the Tsarist autocracy) and whose interventions in French and other Western politics were little more than Liberal. Presumably because he avoided revolutionary involvement in the west, he was in his day regarded with great esteem by western liberals. To this day one comes across mention of him, by academic writers on socialism who regard him as the most (or even only) significant anarchist.

I neglect to mention him largely because I know virtually nothing of his work. I can remember once reading a biography of him (but can't remember what it said) and don't recall ever having read any of his writings. I did once meet someone who, on hearing that I was an anarchist, introduced himself as a Herzen anarchist, which may well have meant that he was an anarchist at a safe distance. As far as I know Herzen's legacy has not contributed anything to the anarchist tradition, however highly academics may prize it.

Anarchism Grows

Tolstoi, Thoreau, Doukhabours, Monashii, The Brotherhood Church and so, eventually, the mass movements of Gandhi, Dolci, Luther King, Cesar Chavez and the 'greens'...

I may have given the impression in the last section that except for a few un-reconciled hangovers from Bakuninism, all anarchists in the last decade of the nineteenth century (and a similar time in the early twentieth century) would have seen themselves as Kropotkinist. That would be very far from the truth.

Kropotkin undoubtedly played a very prominent role in the movement and the vast majority (but not all) of those who considered themselves anarchists would have viewed his ideas as most important, but there were other traditions. Some (but again not all) descended, in part, from Bakunin and of these at least two were positively hostile to Kropotkin. An anarchist current can also be detected in another tradition, whose nineteenth century promulgators certainly did not regard themselves as anarchist, even though they would have conceded that their ideas were well outside both the political mainstream and the mainstream of leftist dissent.

This latter reached modern revolutionary consciousness with the writings of Tolstoi and Thoreau, although once they are considered an inheritance can also be discerned through Blake, the Amish and other Moravians. Further through the Ranters, Levellers and Diggers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Waldensians and those early friars *"who taught men by Plato, and proved it by Senecca, that all men were created equal"* and in the lifestyle of the Huron and Iroquois, the Kikuyu, various Polynesian islanders and the Siberian tribes that Kropotkin himself had described.

Tolstoi, Thoreau & Religious Anarchists

The egalitarian element is important in Tolstoi and Thoreau but is secondary to their 'back to nature' communitarian teaching and their stress on non-violence. Even these have to be deduced from small sections within a much larger body of writing, as similarly from short-spell activities in the midst of much of their lives that didn't always fit their professed beliefs.

Thoreau's Walden Pond is often seen as the birthplace of the ecology movement but Thoreau's spell there was very brief. His *Duty of Civil Disobedience* was a magnificent birth of modern radical pacifism, but Thoreau as an active opponent of slavery did not make the clear breach with the violent acts of the bulk of the abolitionist movement. That would have been expected by those who would now describe themselves as Thoreauist pacifists.

Tolstoi's preaching against landlordism and his advocacy of both rights for women and communal living were all clear. He was unfortunately so shaped by his upbringing and position as a large landowner that there are rather serious departures in his life from what he preached. Similarly, there was an anti-militarist and anti-nationalist element in Anna Karenina, while he clearly understood the evils of Bonapartism, he was somewhat over-tolerant of Tsarism.

Nevertheless, here were two very powerful writers, whose message stated (clear statement in Thoreau, strongly implied in Tolstoi) that if "*'government is best that governs least', then government is best that governs not at all*".[13] It was natural that Kropotkin should claim them as fellow anarchists, though it took him a long time and (in Tolstoi's case) some very diplomatic correspondence to persuade Thoreau's successors and Tolstoi himself that they were anarchist.

Tolstoi (despite his doubts about all organized religion) had been happy to identify himself with early forms of religious pacifism and/or communitarianism (notably Amish, Doukhabours and Quakers).

It is worth recording that in 1950s Siberia there was a sizable pacifist-communitarian movement called the Monashii (derived from the Doukhabours, and influenced by Tolstoi), who were responsible for the first instances of civil disobedience against nuclear weapons. But even though they were in the Soviet Union this didn't, of course, prevent Western supporters of nuclear weapons, saying *"you wouldn't be able to do that in Russia and the fact that you can do it here proves how much more democratic we are here (and why we need the Bomb to defend that democracy)"*. Though we may concede that the prisons to which we western civil disobedients were sent were probably preferable to the gulag to which the Monashii went, this testifies all the stronger to the great courage of the Russian pacifists.

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[13] Thoreau quoting Thomas Jefferson/Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Despite the horrifying recent pictures of some Amish, not only demonstrating for Bush but under the banner "Veterans for Bush," the majority of the Amish have remained war-resisters, live in socialistic communities, and are generally active in anti-racist and anti-poverty campaigns.

The Christadelphians, the Jehovah's Witnesses and some smaller groups also insisted that their members refrain from taking part in the armed services but, except for the Bruderhof and the Brotherhood Church, they also insisted that their members play no part in any political movement, including the pacifist one.

The Bruderhof, like the Amish, are a Moravian group. In the Middle Ages in Bohemia and Moravia, the Hussites (Huss was influenced by Wyclif) were a pre-Luther revolt against the Church hierarchy, which battled against the imperial forces and evolved a militantly egalitarian position. After a long struggle they split, most making their peace with church and state, but the 'Taborist' minority continued.

When they too were defeated, many managed to continue egalitarian-communitarianism by adopting a primitive pacifism (some preferred to live in Hungary under the Ottoman Empire, than under the Austrian one).[14]

When Luther and others brought about the Reformation, the Moravians (like the Anabaptists) stood aside from the main movement, since it wished to retain hierarchy in lay society and constituted a clear third force; so were persecuted by both Protestants and Catholics. Some survived and of these the Bruderhof is strictly communistic (though not entirely egalitarian and not in the least libertarian).

I also mentioned the Quakers in a previous paragraph and for most of my life they have been the largest religious grouping active within the peace movement. Quaker "Concerns" (with social justice, refugee relief, freedom from hunger campaigns and International Amnesty) have set the pattern for the wider movement.

Tolstoian and Thoreauist ideas have been widespread amongst Quakers in the twentieth century and there have been many pacifist-socialist communities whose origins have lain in Quaker circles.

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[14] Internally, the Bruderhof are very authoritarian and elitist, so on no way can they be described as anarchist.

This was less the case in the mid-nineteenth century because the Quakers were then frequently very wealthy, which led most to seek a modus *vivendi* with the establishment. Many were extremely conservative and more had turned to Pietism - either ignoring the things of this world or confining their interests in it to charitable works (which, however admirable, failed to challenge the power system). This caused a split within Quaker ranks and the formation of the Brotherhood Church.

This relatively sizable body had a significant influence on the wider socialist movement. It had churches and communities round the country and it hosted, in one of its churches, the famous conference of the Russian Socialists, where the party split into Mensheviki and Bolsheviki.

There were various splits, with the most ideologically pure faction initially residing in a largish commune in Purleigh, Essex before moving North to Leeds and then to a small commune near Pontefract. They were incredibly courageous, refusing to pay taxes to a militarist state or to register births, marriages and deaths. Their members spent more time in prison than out.

Unfortunately, they barely survive (with only two remaining members) although there are several hundred of us who count ourselves honoured to be associated with them.

One larger community deriving from the Brotherhood Church still exists and this is Whiteways.[15] It is near Birdlip in Gloucestershire and was founded in the nineteenth century. It was originally established by members of a Croydon congregation of the Brotherhood Church, though while establishing the colony the pioneers broke with the congregation and abandoned their religion.

Another grouping inspired by the Brotherhood Church does not survive but deserves a mention for its role within the wider Left in the first three decades of this Century.

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[15] Whiteways long ago ceased to live communally but has retained a system where no one owns property there. Indeed an attempt by one family to claim they owned property there and to sell it, sparked a court case. The Court recognized the Colony's right to have abolished ownership there.

After he had stayed at one of the Brotherhood Church's settlements, an Anglican priest named Tom Pickering founded the Brotherhood of the Way, which played a significant role in support of industrial and other struggles on the Clyde before and during WWI. Its priests, then and later, clocked up a fairly large tally of arrests and imprisonments for their activities. After its centre had moved down to the East Midlands it acted as a resource centre during the General Strike.

During the Hunger Marches in the 1930s, it was again used as a centre where those worn out by their actions could go to recover.[16]

The Brotherhood of the Way went to Canada in 1942 but left one of its elder members and a married priest behind. In the mid-1960s, Father Charles Stimson launched the Christian Committee of 100, which later became Christian Non-Violent Action and survived the collapse of the secular Committee of 100. About the same time, Stimson and Desmond O'Neill tried to reform a British section of the Brotherhood of the Way.

Nowadays, probably the most notable Christian tradition that has learnt from Tolstoi and Thoreau is the New York Catholic Worker and its various offshoots, foremost of which is the Ploughshares Movement. Other strands of anarchist thought also went into their inspiration - there is a line back from the Catholic Worker to the L'Esprit group in France, they adapted Martin Buber's ideas and were influenced by Proudhon (to produce what they called *Personalisme*, an individualist commitment to the communal Christian lifestyle). A similar mix, though less intellectual, is to be found in writings of Eric Gill.

The impact of Tolstoi and Thoreau on non-anarchist pacifism has been enormous. Gandhi obviously reworked their civil disobedience ideas and although he put them into the context of Hinduism and a generally Eastern context, he nevertheless acknowledged his debt. Nor were they the only anarchists he had studied, he copied some of his tactics from the IWW, acknowledging their former use and his work on fasting owed more than a little to Michael Davitt.

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[16] The Brotherhood of the Way was not the only order to play a part in the Hunger Marches. The Anglican Franciscans, first founded in India, were formed in Britain by the merger of smaller groups of priests who threw themselves into the unemployed struggles of the 1930s upon returning from India.

When Gandhi began to succeed in India, he realized that his first actions, in South Africa (which had been intended to preserve Indian privileges over Africans) had been harmful and so he sent his son, Manilal, back to South Africa to restart civil disobedience.

No doubt much happened after that but it may be no accident that, although the ANC in time resorted to guerrilla warfare, it never totally broke with the civil disobedient tradition. This influence is also reflected in the post-Apartheid settlement.

Gandhi's influence on the western pacifist movement, even before WWII, was enormous. During and immediately after World War II, the Communite de l'Arche and the Emmaus rag-pickers (both in Paris) and Danilo Dolci in Sicily, adapted Gandhian ideas to Western Europe, consciously injecting into them a further dose of Thoreau and Tolstoi. At the same time in the United States black pacifists made their mark, initially campaigning (perhaps paradoxically) against segregation within the armed forces and later launching the first Freedom Ride. When they were imprisoned in twenty one states of the union, they set off a series of court cases, which eventually led to a Supreme Court decision that segregation on buses crossing state lines was contrary to the US Constitution. That, in turn, inspired the Montgomery bus strike and the 1960s black upsurge. This upsurge overlapped with resistance to the Vietnam War and had its continuation in Latin-American struggles for union rights.

Danilo Dolci, the non-violent leader of Sicilian peasant and unemployed resistance, first visited Britain in the early 1950s. Even though he did not call himself an anarchist, it was, nevertheless, thought natural that he should speak at the Malatesta Club (linked to Freedom) and at pacifist meetings.[17] Dolci took from Gandhi not merely non-violence, but the idea of the reverse strike. When the Sicilian council authorities said there was no work to be done, Dolci would find a bridge or a road needing repair, or a village with no school buildings, and lead people to do the work, before very publicly submitting a bill.

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[17] Five years later, when Dolci came over again, there was a more middle of the way prospective audience and the presence at one of his meetings of a dozen of us 'selling pacifist and anarchist papers caused some considerable offence.

I recognise that I have talked at length about Christian anarchists and others influenced by Tolstoi (as also Tolstoi's and Thoreau's influence on Ghandi) but have not, *mea culpa,* gone into Daoist, Buddhist, Hindu or Sufi-Islamic anarchist currents. I know that these exist and have met admirers of them, but I lack any understanding of them.

Though not pacifist and certainly not Tolstoian, one other religious anarchist tradition would need to be referred to at this point, al though it did not arise until later.

Nikolai Berdyaev, as both Bolshevik and a Christian found himself in rebellion against the regime after the Revolution. As a refugee, he went back through Orthodox theology, considering matters that had influenced Tolstoi, but developed strikingly differing anarchist theories. Despite the fact that his arguments for anarchism were couched in spiritual rather than materialist terms and despite adopting a near-pacifist position, his anarchism was far nearer that of Bakunin than that of Tolstoi. Though I doubt if Bakunin (whose extreme atheism Marx regarded as *"vulgar materialism"* and who was in no way a pacifist) would have relished the resemblance.

Contrasting Nineteenth Century Traditions

Max Stirner was a contemporary of Marx and Bakunin who wrote *The Ego and his Own*".[18] He didn't regard himself as a socialist and certainly not as an anarchist, but this didn't stop his followers deciding that his was the only real anarchist philosophy.

Stirner's thesis (like that of Bentham) was 'Enlightened Self-Interest', i.e. if people really understood their own self-interest they would behave, if not co-operatively, at least in a civilized manner and therefore society, as a result, would be all right.[19]

Stirner believed that all attempts at altruism were, in fact, disguised authoritarian impulses. No doubt some schools of modern psychological theory endorses his position but he consequently dismissed Bakunin, Marx and all other advocates of social change.

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[18] Marx wrote about him and called his work *"the German Philosophy"*.

[19] A view somewhat too much akin to Adam Smith's belief that the market will always bring things out alright, for my liking.

It is therefore hard to say why Tucker and subsequently (and more importantly) Armand, adopted the term anarchism for Stirner's views. Although it is easy to understand, once they had so done, why they then decided that Kropotkin's views (as also those of any other anarchist-communist) were incompatible with those of Stirner and therefore, that only individualist anarchists were in fact anarchist.

Whether as the product of Stirnerite views or whether despite them, some individualist anarchists have been remarkably fine revolutionaries, but the tradition has lead to some nasty followers.[20] Mussolini boasted that he kept Stirner's book by his bed-side as his main inspiration whilst a 1950s Australian group, arguing that the state and society were coterminous, said that therefore, anything anti-social was anti-state and ended by claiming that rape was a revolutionary act. Then there's Ayn Rand's "Anarcho-Capitalism."

Throughout South America there are (and have been throughout the Twentieth Century) anarchist papers and largish movements associated with them called *Terra y Libertad* (Land and Liberty).

I believe that this stems from Michael Davitt, who was a leading Irish campaigner against British rule. He was a follower of Bakunin, who worked with Parnell, organized peasant leagues advocating a form of agrarian communism and published a paper called *Land and Liberty*. This was suppressed by the British administration in Ireland and he briefly came briefly to Britain where, paradoxically, he was able to publish his paper in London, though it was suppressed in Ireland.

However, he found himself cut off from his potential area of support and as he was also a Roman Catholic (nearly all British anarchists were atheist and, generally, particularly anti-Catholic), he was shunned by much of the British anarchist movement (though not by Kropotkin). It has to be admitted that despite the Bakunian element in his thinking, Marx was more apt to see the importance of his role than some anarchists. Consequently, he moved first to Spain and then to South America, and published papers of the same name there.

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[20] No doubt it is not entirely fair to mention this - some pretty vile people proclaim themselves Christian and it would be unfair to Judge Christ by them, nor fair to judge Marx by Stalin or Trotsky by the SWP.

A few years back, in answer to a query in Freedom as to the origin of the Land and Liberty current, one authority amongst anarchist historians said it was derived from a Polish group (Polish Jewish in fact), which had that name in Yiddish. He offered no explanation as to how the name transferred to Latin America and no reasons for rejecting the previously accepted derivation, so I do not know exactly where the truth lies.

It may be that these papers died out without leaving heirs and that in some way, anarchists of the Polish-Yiddish tradition moved to South America almost immediately afterwards and founded a movement of the same name. Or it may be that Freedom's authority (who was after all National Secretary of the British Humanist Association) had carried on the old British anarchist prejudice against its Christian minority and wrote Michael Davitt out of the anarchist cannon.

Nihilism

Nihilism has had a bad press and has always been assumed to be a form of anarchism. If Dostoyevski was correct, all that the name meant was that its members accepted no custom, rule or belief whose worth to the human population was not capable of logical proof. If so, it differed little as a theory from Utilitarianism, the ideology of British Liberals.

There were certainly Nihilists who believed in assassination. A position that, in other contexts, most anarchists (like the Marxists) would regard as ignoring the economic/social foundations of class society and mistakenly identifying evils with individual rulers. They argued that, faced with Tsarist autocracy, where workers, peasants and, indeed, even capitalists feared to organize politically, targeting tyrannical police chiefs (and announcing this in advance) could alter the situation.

No doubt there was a considerable similarity between the more militant Nihilists and Nchaev, as well as an overlap between them and the general run of Bakunians. But, in fact, the dominant personalities amongst the Nihilists (people like Belinski) professed themselves opponents of anarchism.[21]

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[21] To Marx's surprise, Belinski, with the majority Nihilist organization, wrote to Marx asking him to represent them in the International, mandating him to oppose Bakunin on their behalf.

That this is not generally known presumably stems from the fact that later, Plekhanov took for himself the mantle of orthodox Marxism, disowning any tradition other than his own, which claimed descent from Marx. Although it is generally known that this was why, in Russia, there was the contrast between the Socialist Revolutionary Party and the Social Democratic Labour Party.

In recent years there has been much surprise when academics revealed letters of Marx which showed that, at least for a time, he accepted the 'Narodnik' argument that, because of the survival of the Mir (a Russian communal system retaining an element of primitive communism) that it would be possible for Russia to pass to socialism without previously going through a period of capitalism.[22]

For those wishing to study Russian pre-revolutionary politics, it should be noted that not only were both of the parties divided, i.e. Mensehvik and Bolshevik, Right Essars and Left Essars, there were also many parties outside their ranks, which had at some stage or another been associated with them.

The two main capitalist parties were the Cadets (Constitutional Democrats) and the Octobrists. The Cadets were launched by Peter Struve (until then an associate of Plekhanov's) who took Plekhanov's insistence that capitalism had to be built first to its logical conclusion. When the Tsar promulgated the October compromise allowing the existence of an emasculated Duma (parliament), the Octobrists accepted this and so broke away from the Cadets.

The Trudovlks (Labour Party) originated from unions initially founded by the Social Democrats, while Kerenskl's Populists similarly arose from people first politicised by the Essars.

Long before the split between the Left and Right Essars, the Socialist Revolutionaries had split into Maximalist (Bakunian) and Minimalist (Lavrovlte)

Nihilist (or perhaps Nchaevian) influence spawned two inter-connected small movements in France - The Apaches (named after a Native American tribe who had somehow gained a violent reputation) and the Bonot Gang.

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[22] The Narodniks were in a way an intermediate stage as Nihilism developed into Essars. That correspondence had of course always been known by the Essars although its existence was ignored by Plekhanov.

The Apaches took on the tradition of assassination but with a vile modification. Starting from the seemingly reasonable comment that there are no innocent bourgeois, they resorted not to targeted assassinations with bullets but the use of primitive bombs ("*explosive devices*" in the court jargon), assuming that bombs in business areas would only reach the bourgeois.

Though they occasionally reached the lesser bourgeoisie, they far more often killed white-collar workers, artisans and members of the minor professional classes.

The Bonot Gang, though they promoted a Robin Hood type self image and used anarchist slogans to excuse their thefts, do not really seem to justify any claim to be politically motivated. The American Bonny and Clyde gang have been said to be similarly motivated and certainly achieved greater notoriety.

In Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman,* a gang in the mountains (which counts amongst its members both anarchists and Marxists) specializes in kidnapping passing motorists (those were days when only wealthy could own cars) and demanding a ransom. In Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* similar gangs play local roles in the Spanish Civil War whilst in any account of Zapata, there appears to be a fine line between the peasant revolutionary bands of people like Pancho Villa, even perhaps of Zapata himself, and robber bands. It was therefore an influence that spread but it is also perhaps understandable that many urban anarchists in Mexico opposed the Zapatistas.

The Origins of Syndicalism

Syndicalism (in Romance languages called anarcho-syndicalism), which for most of the 20th Century was the largest anarchist tradition, actually first arose as a new off-shoot from Marxism.[23] The word syndicalism is simply French for trade unionism, which is why on the Continent it has to be qualified as anarcho-syndicalism, especially as Mussolini and Franco talked of national-syndicalism. In English, syndicalism refers only to the 'anarcho' variety and has no other meaning, so the use of 'anarcho-syndicalism' is tautologous.

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[23] Or rather, two new offshoots. While syndicalism emerged in France, there was a simultaneous birth of 'revolutionary industrial unionism' in the United States.

In France at the end of the nineteenth century, there were six rival socialist parties, each with its own industrial organization whilst the workers started by wanting unity and more, they wanted rank and file control.

The parties had each handed down its own industrial line and, believing in governmental routes to socialism, had handed down policies geared to maximizing the chances of that particular party taking governmental power, in the way that it advocated. So, the unity was to be vitally democratic, all decisions taken on the shop floor and delegates to town, regional or national councils were all mandated. Obviously there had to be majority decisions in such councils, but these were only effective if endorsed by reference back to the various face-to-face shop floor meetings. All paid officials were to be paid only the average income of those they represented, all such appointments were to last only for one year and the official was to return to shop floor work for a period before he/she could stand for re-election or election to another paid post. All elections were to be revocable if the elected lost the support of the membership. The unions put their trust to direct action, rather than political campaigns or mediation.

It was not long before they suggested, *"if all wealth and all power springs from the point of production, and the control thereof, that surely is where class relations will change. The state is superstructure. No doubt there are matters to be decided that are not exclusively industrial but workers, already organized industrially, can form organizations on the same model to deal with non-industrial matters. The state exists only to manage capitalism, so for socialists to become involved in running the state means that they become involved in running capitalism. If workers organized in really active and democratic rank and file organizations seize the means of production, at the point of production, they are half-way to reorganizing society and the state plays no necessary part in this."*

On this basis, the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) or General Confederation of Labour was launched and almost immediately, it fused with an older body, the Bourses de Travail.

The Bourses had been created, under the influence of various utopian and reformist socialists, as the workers' own employment exchanges.

The workers in them, like those in the unions that launched the CGT, had grown fiercely democratic in the control of their own organizations. As they took control of their own organizations, they saw that they needed to take a more revolutionary approach than had been suggested by their former mentors.

Both in the Bourses and in the early CGT there were activists who were already anarchist, but the majority by far would have regarded themselves as some form of Marxist until the CGT was denounced by the parent parties as anarchist.

Whereas Marxist socialism has its origins in the theories of an intellectual whose theories first developed outside the socialist movement (which he only joined as and when that movement began to engage with and to accept his theory) syndicalism arose amongst militant workers purely spontaneously. Theory came later.

Generally such theory came as the work of sympathizers but the early syndicalists' previous experience of parties had left them with a distrust of intellectuals. Consequently, though sympathizers wrote theories and syndicalist workers might quote these, they were never adopted as documents of the movement nor were they made essential beliefs for it. That distance towards theoretical formulations has always remained as a characteristic.

There were of course theorists and some of their theories, though they were never made mandatory for syndicalists, have nevertheless become almost axiomatic.

But even then, the general syndicalist distrust of intellectuals held and so there has never been debate, as there is in Marxism, as to what precisely the original author meant. Perhaps this is lucky as Sorel, the most famous and prolific of such theorists, left syndicalism and moved a long way to the right.

In contrast to the Marxist desire to conform the exact letter of the text, each generation of syndicalists has taken theories provided for the situation of the early syndicalists and reshaped them to suit new times. Some of these theories have since been mistakenly assumed to parallel Leninist concepts and notable amongst such theories are:

Propaganda by the Deed: Originally a slogan of the advocates of terrorism, for whom the assassination of a tyrant may have been only a symbolic action but was, nevertheless, propaganda.

In spreading the idea of self-liberation, every spontaneous strike was therefore seen as playing a propagandist role and, indeed, somewhat better propaganda, since it didn't carry the same negative impact as assassination until the capitalist press misrepresented it. The term/theory has since been further adapted [partly by the present writer] to fit the translation of Ghandian NVDA to Western politics, especially when used by small groups.

Motivating Myth: A theory originally produced by Henri Bergson to describe how beliefs, whether true or not, had inspired movements throughout history - not just in politics, but in art and technology. It was applied in a somewhat different way by Sorel to political aims.

From the beginning, a syndicalist aim had been the Social General Strike, i.e. if all workers in all lands struck, not coming out of the factories but occupying them, the capitalists would be deprived of their monetary base and so would not be able to pay armies, police or scabs to put them down.

Obviously achieving this is difficult if not impossible, so people were beginning to suggest other ways to the same end, causing horror amongst purists. Sorel said it may well be impossible to achieve the Social General Strike but working towards it would, almost incidentally, achieve any results that another possible alternative route might.

The difference between this concept and the later Leninist idea of the Transitional Demand is clear. The Myth, by both overstating and simplifying the aim, clearly warns radicals that if they take up the self-liberation struggle, they have difficulties ahead.

The Transitional Demand understates the difficulties, asking that a revolutionary demand appear to be one only for reform, in order to trick workers into engaging in struggles for which they are not ready

Militant Minority: In France, then as now, only a minority of workers actually belong to unions, though when it comes to major strikes there is generally as much readiness to come out as here. Sorel argued that a militant minority existed that used propaganda by the deed and which, in the normal course of events, made sacrifices that the majority of the workers did not.

> This again is obviously very different from the Leninist concept of the Vanguard of the Proletariat; a minority which the Leninists see as becoming the leaders, with the duty of stamping out reformist currents in the movement, and who become rulers in the post-revolutionary society. Though it must be confessed that there have been syndicalists (notably in Spain) who used the term in a Leninist sense, thereby stamping out the spontaneity of the rank and file, and disarming the movement.

The American version of syndicalism, the IWW, was formed at almost the same time, though its pre-history goes back a little further. Like the French, it originated from predominantly Marxist origins and there are, as will be seen, two major paradoxes in the origins of the IWW.

Marx had a regular column in the New York Herald Tribune and there were a circle of influential thinkers round John Frémont,[24] who corresponded with Marx.

There were also a number of Continental-European refugee-socialists who, when Marx moved the International to the USA to stop anarchist influence, were entrusted with its running. This soon after merged with a slightly larger body then called the Socialistic Labour Party, though it soon after dropped the "ic".

The SLP survived a split but probably would not have merited the notice of historians if it had not been joined in the 1890s by a remarkable (though irascible and intolerant) Classics Professor called Daniel De Leon.

De Leon first became interested in socialism after seeing (from a college window) a march by striking workers. He moved rapidly through a number of reformist groups before joining the SLP and, having joined, his views developed further. In recognition that the party had gained a brilliant adherent, De Leon became national secretary after only two or three years of membership.

American unions were at the time very much divided into small craft brotherhoods, each competing for membership with comparable crafts and willing to undersell their rivals in order to secure jobs. So early on in his career as a socialist, De Leon came to the conclusion that craft unions were a major prop of the capitalist system and that socialists must create new union forms.

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[24] Frémont was the founding Presidential candidate of the Republican Party, who launched the American Liberal Party when the Republicans moved to the right. He also worked on the Herald Tribune.

As a nineteenth century university professor, he had little direct experience of union struggles but no doubt learnt from SLP members active in unions.

His belief in a new and different form of union organization unlike, say, that of the French syndicalists and those with whom he briefly cooperated in the States, stemmed from a purely theoretical position.

Starting from his perception that craft unions divided the workers and helped the bosses, he identified the need to build a class based union and worked through to arguing for a single union of all workers.

This would be made up of industrial federations, eventually resting on councils of all the workers in a factory and he insisted that such unions must be committed to the overturn of society and the establishment of socialism. In arguing this, he also re-examined Marxist theory.

Marx had stressed that a new society was born within the shell of the old and that capitalism had been forced, for its own purposes, to sow within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

The mass factory system made class solidarity rather than craft exclusiveness the necessary organizing form and from this basis De Leon went on to reject the workers' state interpretation of Marx; saying that the sole role of the party would be to hand over *de jure* power to the industrial union. No doubt the bosses would not accept a democratic vote, so then the workers should "take and hold" (stay in strike locking out the bosses).

He railroaded this conception through party conferences, upsetting the old party leadership. Most of them had not only played major roles in the old craft unions but had also won positions of municipal power (mayors or councillors), which meant that they were trying to win piecemeal reforms, seeing themselves as operating local workers' states. They opposed De Leon's move away from the workers' state theory and left *en bloc*.

While De Leon had come to a belief in industrial unionism on theoretical grounds, others were having experiences akin to that of the French syndicalists and so, on the basis of their experience rather than of full theories, were advocating a similar movement.

Though the contrast in the way they approached the concept, coupled with a fundamentally different approach to class as a whole, meant that the co-operation was to be short-lived, there were strong currents:

1) Eugene Debs had attempted to build a united railway (industrial) union, the American Railway Union, which had been met with the full force of capitalist repression. This had converted him to socialism and at first he tried to sponsor a co-operative commonwealth, soon learning that capitalists will never permit such a commonwealth to prosper. Then he launched a social democrat party but didn't join De Leon because he reacted against the polemical tones that De Leon employed to crush those with whom he disagreed in the party. His party merged with the SLP old guard to become the Socialist Party of the USA. However, though Debs had found De Leon's tone unpleasant, he recognized the value of De Leon's Industrial unionist theories.

2) There was still a remnant of the union but all Debs's former comrades of the ARU had accepted his belief that their industrial union was defeated and that they must seek a different way of attaining justice for workers.

3) America had expanded to the West Coast (largely because of the mineral wealth to be found in the mountains there) and a mass of people had moved west from the rest of the Continent (others straight from Europe). Many had originally come looking for gold, others for land to settle but failing to find either, or at least a sufficiency of either, they found themselves forced to work for others in the mining industry.

Mining had had a radical tradition elsewhere in the States. Two decades before, the expansion of the Pennsylvania mines had led to clashes between experienced miners of Welsh extraction and new mining recruits of Irish descent, which threw up the Molly Maguires.

The Western Miners' Federation met the usual opposition, with the bosses paying for gangs to attack union members and in order to win allies, it formed a larger alliance open to all workers in the Western states, before trying to expand to form a general union of all American workers. This group, with the editors of three local labour papers, met and launched the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) in 1905.

There was a lull in the militancy of Western miners but a rise in that of other workers throughout the USA, so that the numbers of the IWW grew rapidly. In particular, it gained the adherence of itinerant workers.

There were a number of seasonal jobs (many in agriculture, many in construction) whose workers had not been previously unionised because they weren't consistently in one place or in one trade. Therefore, they could not belong to unions, which consisted of local brotherhoods of specialised workers, which frequently required new members to wait a year or so before being accepted into membership. The IWW recruited all workers, whatever their trade, wherever they worked and when members moved (whether place or job) they were still in the union.

The Western miners, who were so militant in 1903-1905 (when their bosses were refusing to accept their right to belong to any union) could turn to reformist unionism in 1906-1907 (when the bosses saw the wisdom of some compromise) led to a further split.

Most histories written from either side in the main split[25] suggest this was inevitable, although there is nothing in the written accounts which explains why that should be so. It may be that the accounts leave out the raw emotions or matters of personalities but it may also be that, looking back to the heat of the bitterness created by the split, both sides attributed character faults to their former comrades.

Both sides wanted to ensure that reformists should not again hold official positions within the union. For De Leon, the theorist, although he had written the IWW preamble and its statement of aims, the fault had to lie in these (or at least in their interpretation). The IWW was committed to organizing both in the industrial and the political field to change society, and was essentially a united movement, bringing together a number of previous organizations. This unity of differing groups had also characterized the political groups it supported. De Leon argued (with some justification) that this meant the membership was, at least in theory, open to people who supported very reformist (or even openly pro-capitalist) parties. Therefore the rise of reformist union leaders was inevitable. Others, however, saw the cause of the earlier split in the very nature of union bureaucracy - they distrusted all leadership.

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[25] In fact, there were two splits. The main one between the bulk of the IWW (the 'Wobblies') and a

De Leon tried to change the political clause to insist that all members join the SLP. Had he proposed that they should all join a party committed to social revolution, without insisting that there could be only one such party, he might not have created so many enemies. The majority of the union saw this as personal power politics on De Leon's part and so replied by demanding the abolition of the political clause. This did not mean that they opposed political activity (either on anarchist anti-electoral grounds or as a matter of indifference), as can be seen by the fact that the majority of De Leon's opponents were active within the Debsian party.[26]

Indeed, we have the curious position that De Leon (who believed in fighting elections) promised not to take office but to hand over to the industrial union, whose central theory insisted that, as the state rested on the class divisions created by capitalism, the abolition of capitalism and of the state must happen at the same time. A theory that is normally regarded as the essence of anarchism.

De Leon regarded himself (and is remembered by history) as an opponent of anarchism in all its forms, whilst Big Bill Hayward (and most of the more prominent Wobblies) are remembered by history as syndicalists. It is therefore ironic that the latter believed in fighting elections to capture government (or certainly in alliance direct action), a view that is generally regarded as the standard Marxist line.

Syndicalism varied from country to country. In Britain, although there were a number of attempts to build organizations either on the American or the European syndicalist model, these never gained a significant level of support. Then, in the years just before and during WWI, there was a massive surge of militancy, generally known as the Syndicalist Upsurge (though as much as anything it arose from De Leonist influence). It took two forms - on the one hand a drive to unite craft unions into industrial ones, and on the other, the shop stewards' movement. Shop stewards had until then been merely dues collectors but rank and file organizations sprang up around them, cutting across craft divisions and applying syndicalist approaches, face to face democracy and emphasis on direct action.

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minority that supported the SLP (which for a time created a rival IWW) and a smaller split which saw Debs and his closest SPUTA supporters leave.

[26] Only 4% of the membership took an anarcho-syndicalist line, although most accounts refer to the Wobblies as anarchist-inspired.

Arbeite Franti, Modern Schools & Malatesta

The last three decades of the nineteenth century saw an enormous increase in anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian Empire.

Centuries earlier the kings of Poland had provided sanctuary for Jews fleeing Western Europe and in the eighth century, the Khazars Empire (formed by tribes of Turkomen origin who ruled the Eastern Ukraine and Northern Caucasus) had adopted Karaiism (a non-Rabbinic form of Judaism). So, after the overthrow of the Empire, the Khazars had begun to migrate westward.

As a result, there had been many Jews in the part of Poland that was subject to the Russian Empire and from there, there was massive migration with the refugees arriving penniless, with governmental regulations against them and moving to ill-paying jobs in the slums of most industrial towns (so obviously the East End of London had an high proportion).

Though there had been anti-Tsarist (even socialist and anarchist) movements and indeed, uprisings in Poland, for the most part the refugees had no traditions of political activity.

Their plight inspired Rudolf Rocker, a German anarchist who had settled in the East End of London, learned Yiddish and married Milly Witcop, a member of one of the families that had been anarchist before fleeing Russia. The refugees' trouble had been that they could not get accepted into craft unions, so the movement he created, wag pragmatic syndicalist in form, but did not share syndicalism's emphasis on an union of workers in all crafts.

The 'Arbeite Fraind'/'Frei Arbeite Stimme' (Workers' Friend/Free Workers' Movement) was anarchist-inspired and operated through radical caucuses in a number of unions. It inspired a similar movement in The United States and Rocker eventually moved there.[27] In the years before and during WWI, the movement achieved an enormous reputation, partly no doubt because 'Peter the Painter' (a Latvian Social Democrat who was accused of staging robberies and who, in "the Siege of Sydney Street," was shot at Churchill's orders) had once attended one of its meetings and was described by Churchill as an anarchist.

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[27] Strictly speaking, it was the American movement that was called Frei Arbeite Stimme and the British that was the Arbeite Fraind, but non-members generally referred to both as the FAS.

Between the wars, the rise of Mosley-fascism meant that the bulk of the working class accepted the Jewish population of East London as an integral part of it and rallied to its support against Mosley, so the bulk of the FAS moved away to join the bigger battalions of the labour movement. However, a remnant persisted and the organization lasted for at least three quarters of a century.

Charlie Lahr, who had worked as Rocker's assistant, ran a bookshop and very small publishers, but by the end nearly all FAS members were retired and its involvement in politics was largely a matter of subsidizing the wider British syndicalist movement.

They were nevertheless indomitable and a real example to younger anarchists. On returning to London from Oxford in 1967, I was introduced, by the Chair of the FAS, to *"our new young secretary"* (who must have been in her 70s).

Sebastien Ferrier, a Spanish syndicalist concerned with breaking away from top-down educational forms, launched the Modern Schools movement. Whilst later educational rebels like Homer Lane, AS. Neill & Ivan Illich have had a far more widespread influence, Ferrier did start the ball rolling and because in his schools children chose the syllabus and made contact with people with knowledge of the subject (inviting them to come and teach), it in some ways went further than the later reformers.

The movement came to Britain when children from FAS families in the East End of London told Kropotkin that they wanted to form such a school. They were joined by families influenced by Stewart Headlam and I believe there were four such schools in the country by 1914.

Which is cause and which is effect it is hard to say but whenever a syndicalist movement flourishes, then there is also an upsurge or other forms of radical direct action. Feminism, educational reform, anti-militarism, anti-imperialism, anti-racism, concern with the environment or whatever.

It hardly matters whether it is a case of the need for a generalized climate of revolt for workers to turn in any large numbers to syndicalism, or whether the rise of a syndicalist movement also gives rise to liberatory movements in other fields.

So, the relationship between the Ferrier movement and syndicalism is no surprise. Nor is the fact that, at a time when women throughout Europe were seeking suffrage emancipation, M*ujeres Libres,* the women's section of the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT) - the Spanish syndicalist movement - should have been active over a wide variety of issues.

In the years immediately before the Spanish Civil War, *Mujeres Libres* attained very considerable influence and its role in the war (largely neglected by non-anarchist historians of the Civil War) ought to be more widely known.

At much the same time as syndicalism was becoming the majority stream within anarchism, Malatesta emerged as a major anarchist theorist, indeed, as <u>the</u> major theorist of non-syndicalist anarchism.

His objections to syndicalism were broadly three-fold:

He argued, reasonably enough, that the need for unity in any industrial struggle means that revolutionaries have to unite with reformists and therefore, the revolutionary case tends to get swallowed up. However this equally tends to be true about any other campaigning political struggle, particularly direct action based ones. And yet, direct action works because trying to go through constitutional procedures survives the action and keeps the revolutionary belief alive. Moreover, unless the revolutionary was an ivory-tower purist, which Malatesta certainly was not, s/he had to be involved in organizations that made just that sort of compromise.

He also argued, again with a lot of justice, that insisting on any organizational form played against the spontaneity of the mass of workers. Whether or not an industrial organization is the best road to the revolution, revolutionaries should not tie the workers to a blueprint in advance – the workers should be left to decide when they take spontaneous action. But the trouble is, not having a blueprint can itself become a blueprint!

Syndicalist organizations sprang up from precisely the sort of spontaneity that Malatesta advocated and although they certainly lost impetus with time, enough remained to act as the nucleus for future struggles, spreading the ideas of the movement.

This raised the third prong of his argument - that all organizations degenerate and revolutionary organizations inevitably move either to reformism or bureaucracy. True enough, the only cure for that lies in the spontaneity that he had stressed, with each new wave of radicals would no doubt have to struggle against their initial mentors, but that is still an easier task than recreating the movement each time from the beginning.

In the aftermath of WWI the stress on spontaneity and opposition to organization became the hallmark of Council Communism, and in the Thirties and Forties other writers took up the theme writing about bureaucratisation of organizations as an iron law. Notably Michels and Ostragorsky.

Malatesta lived a remarkable life. He seems to have been brilliant at evading police and slipping in and out of countries. Even after the fascists came to power in Italy, he frequently visited London and other cities, keeping in touch with a wide section of the movement. No doubt in a sense the thought remains as a nagging conscience for the syndicalist movement, but it has never amounted to an alternative. I do not know whether it was his influence or that of his later disciples, but he left a tradition of outright opposition to organizing.

A belief that one should not suggest any form of activity, as those who have become committed anarchists will work out for themselves what to do but this means that there is no particular reason why those who have not got such a commitment should do anything.

This had a harmful effect when, at the end of WWII and after a split in the movement, the *Freedom* paper was divorced from the Anarchist Federation - most of the industrial members staying with the federation and were thus deprived of a paper.

Freedom was then taken over by a faction centering on one of Malatesta's disciples, which had the effect of completely immobilizing its support group. For instance, though *Freedom* was supported by a very large number of jazz and other entertainers, as also by quite a fair number of painters, there was very little, if any, effort to put on benefit concerts/exhibitions to raise money for strikers.

I have mentioned De Leon and the SLP in the USA (in the origins of the IWW) and I mentioned that De Leonists, as well as syndicalists, were active in the upsurge round the Shop Stewards' Movement.

To elaborate further, in 1902, members (mainly, but not exclusively, in Scotland) of Hyndmann's Social Democratic Federation decided that it was incurably opportunist and broke away to launch a Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain (SLPGB). At the time members included James Connolly, later to be part of the Irish Easter Rising.[28]

Besides the SLP, the De Leonists also formed the Advocates of Industrial Unionism, which was intended as a British IWW. Indeed, briefly after the IWW-SLP split, the majority of the AIU sided with the IWW.

Before the De Leonists broke from the SDF, they had had talks with other sections of the Federation and when these were not finally consulted before the SLP was founded, they were indignant.

Two years later, two-hundred of them, mainly in London, decided to leave the SDF and a third faction also came out but it didn't last.

The second group linked up with Con Lehane, an industrial organizer from Waterford (and a lieutenant of Connolly's), who had left Waterford for London.[29]

Together with A. Anderson, a former Edinburgh secretary of the SLP and Taylor, a semi-syndicalist (later right-wing) trade union leader, Lehane formed the SPGB. Lehane left early, although the party was active for a time in the AIU and soon after the SLP-IWW split, both Anderson and Taylor had left.

Readers may remember that De Leon's views were called impossibilism, which was then on the Continent the word for revolutionary - that he was opposed to any immediate demand and that his aim was to achieve a mandate for socialism and then dissolve Parliament/Congress (*sine die*) handing the struggle to the industrial union. From the beginning, the SPGB endorsed the opposition to partial demands. Indeed, it stressed the fact that De Leon had not originally so done and attacked him as a late convert to impossibilism.

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[28] Connolly was expelled at about the time of the break with the IWW. He was in the US (employed by the SLP as an industrial organizer) and fell out with De Leon.

[29] Lehane was lambasted for this as it was in the middle of an Irish strike.

Therefore, in practice, it did not initially differ from the SLP, although it adopted a set of principles. One of which, known as Clause 6, committed the party to taking over political government, including the control of the armed forces, saying that these could be used to create/impose socialism. After the split within the AIU and the loss of Anderson and Taylor, it evolved a position where it would fight elections until it had an overwhelming majority and then there would be a spontaneous movement of the workers to change society. It became an article of faith that any 'blueprint' for how this should be done would bind the hands of these future socialists and must be avoided.

So far, I have failed to mention just how far syndicalism spread throughout the world.

The Australian IWW was at one stage larger than the American, which had a million members.

Most parts of Latin America had syndicalist movements, mixing the influences of the French, Spanish and American forms. However most of the Latin American CGTs formed became reformist (the Argentinian eventually Peronist) and so in most South American countries the revolutionaries broke away to form the FORA, which survived as activist syndicalist movements even under military fascist dictatorships. The SAC in Sweden is still a significant movement.

Dissident Trotskyism

Much of what follows concerns dissident Trotskyists or relates to Trotskyism.

It needs to be explained that both Marx and Bakunin talked of the dangers of state capitalism. Both forecast that the other's proposals and strategy would, far from leading to socialism, end by bringing in a monstrous evil. Both wrote into their strategies what they saw as safeguards, criteria that they insisted their followers observe to prevent them creating this evil.

Due to the special nature of the Tsarist regime, Russian socialists (whether Marxist or anarchist) found difficulty with these safeguards:

Lenin's proposal of an elite party was a complete departure from the Marxist text, but then it was not initially intended as a vehicle for attaining socialism, merely one for over-throwing Tsarism and allowing the Russian working class to organize freely.

His organisational innovation flowed from his analysis of imperialism as the final stage of capitalism.

Trotsky's rework of Marx's *"revolution in permanence"* - from being merely the statement that from the moment capitalists seize their power, (in a social revolutionary act) workers must organize for themselves with the eventual aim of revolution, to allowing a revolutionary seizure of power in the conditions created by bourgeois revolution - also swept away Marx's safeguards. When, in the course of 1917 events, the two were combined, they dispensed entirely with the intellectual barrier Marx had erected.

This was, however, done as a purely temporary measure. Lenin and Trotsky both retained their Marxist belief that socialism could only come where there was a developed capitalist industrial society, together with the advanced working movement that could only exist in such a society.

They believed that what they had created (through soviet power) was a *"workers' dominated capitalist state in transition to socialism"*. Lenin was later to add, reproving Trotsky's uncritical position, *"but with severe bureaucratic deformations"*.

Lenin laid down that if the workers' move, so the West should ever be on the brink of socialism, and if the existence of Soviet rule in Russia should hinder that western workers' movement, then the Bolsheviks should have no hesitation in abandoning power in Russia, so as to advance the revolution in the developed capitalist world.

Prior to 1917, Marxists (as well as anarchists) elsewhere greeted this development with considerable reserve.

Rosa Luxemburg was until her death insistent that Lenin's party concept was too centralized and that this could only do damage. Furthermore, she never accepted his analysis of imperialism, which she viewed as a watering down of Marx and she differed in vital respects from Trotsky's view on Permanent Revolution. She was murdered before the International was formed.

Maclean lived to see the formation of the British Communist Party and the International, but refused to join either.

Bordiga formed the Italian Communist Party, the largest in the International, but wasn't prepared to support compromises that Lenin and Trotsky believed essential for safe-guarding Soviet power. So he was eased out of the leadership of the party while Lenin was alive and his faction was expelled from the International before Trotsky came West.

Communist Parties in the West (and the International) were therefore created by people drawn from parties that had previously been based on strategies that explicitly or implicitly rejected the policies of the communists.

Many of these consequently immediately broke away again, refusing to back Lenin's banning of factions, the suspension of normal rights of internal democracy, the banning of other 'soviet parties' and of anarchist groups, his decrees taking power away from workers in the mines, oil wells and railways and the removal of direct power away from Soviets. Alternatively, they were drawn from new youthful intakes who had not fully studied the theories that Marx and/or Bakunin considered essential.

As Marx and Bakunin had predicted and indeed, as Lenin and Trotsky had themselves warned, *"the party substituted its own power for that of the workers through the Soviets. The central committee substituted its power for that of the party and the party general secretary for that of the central committee"*, opening the door thereby to the creation of a *"bizarre despotism"*.[30] But it is possible to see this in terms of a gamble that might have worked, albeit that it went wrong.

Lenin and Trotsky took a great risk and as it happened, it did not pay off. Whether it was inevitable that the hazard would fail is uncertain.

Lenin's Testament - in which he laid down that unless Stalin were removed from office and the party broke with the whole methodology of Stalin, the hope of socialism would be ended - was suppressed by Stalin with the consent of the Central Committee. Trotsky was on that Central Committee and even though he had the excuse that he was ill and away from the centre of power, it has to be accepted that in some measure his supporters, at least, were complicit in that vote and that suppression.

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[30] In 1901, Trotsky predicted that Lenin's party organisation would lead the way to dictatorship. When Lenin reviewed Trotsky's *Permanent Revolution*, he said his proposals would lead to *'bizarre despotism'.*

From Lenin's death until WWII (particularly after the rise of Hitler), Trotskyism and its various left-Leninist offshoots represented a continuation of this gamble. It was, as Trotsky stressed, an episodic/ephemeral strategy.

Whilst he conceded that Stalinist treatment of workers *"differed only from fascism in the greater ferocity* [with which it attacked them]*"*, he argued that, despite the interests of the ruling elite, the basis of workers' power had been created and that this could not easily be abolished.

In such circumstances, he believed that the elite had no foundations within society, could not become hereditary and could not, therefore, last more than a generation.

But in stating this, he posed it as a debateable theory, which would have to stand the test of time. In *"Revolution Betrayed"* it should not last more than one generation but in his testament *"The USSR in War"*, he is - more specific:

"... if at the end of the war now beginning, the world proletariat should actually prove incapable of fulfilling the mission placed upon it by the course of development, nothing else would remain except only to recognize that the socialist programme, based on the internal contradictions of capitalist society ended as Utopia".

Those who still, sixty and more years after the end of the war that was *"then beginning"*, call themselves Trotskyist (or Leninist) show that they have neglected to study the writings of Lenin and/or Trotsky.

They claim to follow people who took a calculated risk and in so doing, set aside Marx's ideas. However, according to their calculations and the criteria left in both their Testaments, that gamble went wrong; to continue that gamble is to repudiate them. It can hardly be surprising that when Trotskyists actually read Trotsky - rare though this may be - they are apt to turn to anarchism.

Anarchist Opposition within the Russian Revolution:

Makhno and Kronstadt

The myth goes that the Bolsheviks were the sole party to make the October Revolution.

In fact, the Bolsheviks were split on the issue - the majority of the 'Internal Leadership', i.e. the leadership elected by those members who had not gone into exile, opposed the revolution and actually denounced it just before it took place.

Lenin, and his closest collaborators in exile, constituted the 'External Leadership'. By the rules of the Party (rules that Lenin himself had put in place), they were technically expelled when they returned from exile and refused to abide by the decisions previously made by the Internal Leadership, thus infringing that party discipline (which until then Lenin had said was all important). The expulsion did not, of course, work.

The party rank and file were, in Lenin's words, *"ten thousand times more radical than the party leadership"* and 'the non-party masses', *"a further ten thousand times more radical than the party masses"*. A situation that totally reversed what Lenin had predicted and which made nonsense of the theory of the Vanguard Party on which he created the Bolsheviks.

The slogan *"all power to the Soviets"* had first been raised by the Maximalists, the wing of the Social Revolutionaries that had supported Bakunin. It was taken up by other anarchist groups, then by a number of small splinter Marxist parties, then by Trotsky's 'Inter-District' network of dissident Bolshevik and left ex-Menshevik groups and finally, by Lenin when he returned from exile. It was also used by the 'Left Essars', a new left breakaway section of the Social Revolutionaries. All these groups played significant roles in the Soviet Revolution and, very briefly, all participated in the initial Soviet Government.

Lenin's theory had always been that because Russia was economically backward it could not have a socialist revolution until such a revolution had taken place in the economically developed West.

He considered the Russian bourgeoisie too cowardly to make their own capitalist revolution and so he argued that the workers must make a capitalist revolution on the bourgeoisie's behalf. That didn't make him any the less subjectively a socialist, except in so far as he believed that he knew better than the workers what was in their best interests.

He therefore believed that the workers must be prevented from trying to make it a socialist revolution.

That meant that they (and therefore the Soviets) could not be allowed to own and control industry, the Bolsheviks (and by this I mean those Left Bolsheviks who actually supported the Revolution in the first place) therefore had to set about reversing the effects of the Revolution.

The revolution had been won by workers' power. In every factory Soviets, i.e. councils of all the workers, were in power. In every town and district, councils of deputies from those factory Soviets, from peasant communities or from agricultural and other agrarian labourers (with the addition of representatives from army or navy mutineers) formed town/district Soviets and the structure remained the same to the centre. In those industries with a tradition of industrial struggle - oil, the mines and the railways - the workers had very literally taken ownership and control into their hands. But though the workers (peasants, mutineers et al) had objective power, subjectively the majority, whilst socialist in intention, did not believe that workers' power should persist in the immediate future.

Only six months after the Revolution, Trotsky led the Red Army into the most militant working class area, the Vyborg Quarter of St Petersburg (Leningrad), where the anarchist group had its office, suppressing the Soviet and banning the anarchists. A few of the anarchists were sent to labour camps in Siberia, in what were the beginnings of the Gulag and before 1918 was out, there was a similar attack on anarchists in Moscow.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks (by now reunited and having absorbed Trotsky's group) decreed that there should be one-man-management. That meant taking power away from Soviets, particularly in the mines, on the railways and in the oilfields. He also took political/governmental power (local and central) away from the Soviets. In his own words he took over *"the whole apparatus of Tsarist tyranny"*.

While he was doing this he banned all parties other than the Bolsheviks within the Soviets, although not initially the Left Essars, which were bigger than his own group. However, he so limited their access to the Soviets that eventually one of its members tried to assassinate him and provided a justification for banning the party completely.

He also banned all factions within the Bolshevik Party, a party that didn't exclude the right, which had opposed the revolution. The internal and external leaderships were reintegrated and in 1919, he banned the 'Workers' Opposition' and the 'Democratic Centralists', who included most of Trotsky's former Inter-District comrades.

In America's Palmer Raids, a large number of foreign born radicals were arrested and deported, with many sent on an un-seaworthy ship, which duly sank and amounted to immediate execution. Many more, amongst them Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkmann, reached Russia a little before the first purges started, with Goldman and Berkmann amongst the few who escaped. Many others, having struggled for a just society in America, found themselves deported to what claimed to be the workers' state and perished in its prisons.

Naturally, there was resistance and, naturally, anarchism played a large part in this with two movements passing into fairly mainstream history. The Makhnovist Rising in the Ukraine and the Kronstadt Soviet, which were probably the most consciously anarchist but were by no means the only ones.

Makhno's movement, a peasant force in the Ukraine, played a major role alongside the Bolsheviks in the civil war that followed the Revolution. When the Western Allies financed (and supplied with arms/ammunition) former Tsarist generals in an attempt to overthrow the Bolshevik government, it was they, not the Bolsheviks, who drove Right out of the Ukraine and overthrew a middle-of-the-way government there.

However, the Bolsheviks (and as Trotsky was in command of the Red Army at the time, he was directly responsible) did not welcome the idea of rivals on the scene. When Makhno's force was engaged against the Tsarists, the Red Army attacked it in the rear and began two years of fierce fighting between the Red Army and the Makhnovists, Even after the Red Army's victory there were uprisings, which the Bolsheviks attributed, rightly or wrongly, to the Makhnovists.[31]

The Kronstadt sailors were the advanced guard of the 1917 revolution - they stormed the Winter Palace and provided the military guards to defend the Petrograd Soviet.

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[31] The Democratic Centralist opposition within the Bolshevik Party originated as an opposition amongst the party cadres within the Red Army, who were fighting the Makhnovists.

Consequently, the Bolshevists decreed that the troops who were in Kronstadt should not be moved elsewhere - they needed people on whose loyalty they could depend, as otherwise the capital (still Petrograd) was vulnerable to an invasion force coming across the Baltic.

When the Bolsheviks took power away from the Soviets, the Kronstadt sailors rose and were besieged by the Red Army, again led by Trotsky who said *"shoot them down like pigeons"* and who, despite the decree that stated they were the original revolutionary force, tried to pretend that somehow these were new unreliable troops mistakenly drafted in. They were crushed.

Trotsky's role in Leningrad, Moscow, the Ukraine and at Kronstadt obviously discredited him as far as anarchists were concerned.

So after Lenin's death, when he and Stalin were locked in combat for the party leadership, most anarchists were not inclined to take sides nor did they evince great sympathy for Trotsky as he was exiled. A few (notably Rosmer and Monatte) sided with Trotsky, just as Romain Rolland (who had been a KAPDist *vide infra)* famously became Stalinist.

There have been many times when we have co-operated in opposition to Stalinism, as in the normal struggles of the Left against classical capitalism, but always anarchists have had to be wary of the Trotskyist knife in the back. Experience has taught that when this care is neglected we'll regret it.

Councillism and Others

(What Lenin Called the 'Infantillist Ultra-Left')

Syndicalism and Councillism overlap - they have similar origins and similar characteristics - yet it is curious – syndicalism, which was largely Marxist in its origins is generally considered a variety of anarchism, whereas Councillism, which is the same merger of anarchist and dissident Marxist currents is always considered a variety of Marxism.

In Germany at the end of WWI, the main Social Democrat Party co-operated with various bourgeois parties to overthrow the monarchy and establish the Weimar Republic.

In large areas, the workers and mutinying soldiers were not content with this and formed Soviets. The Government, more in response to British and French treaty demands than out of socialist principles, cut back the army and the forcibly demobilized ex-soldiers formed themselves into Frei Korps to combat these.

The Republican Government, supported by the SPD (the main social democrat party) mobilized very violently, both with the remnant of the old army and a new force recruited from the trade unions, to put down left and right. The newly formed Communist Party was handicapped by the fact that Russia saw the German Government as a potential semi-ally against the Western powers.

The German communists split, with the left launching the Communist Workers' Party (KAPD), of which the largest current was The Spartakists,[32] though not all Spartakists joined the KAPD.

The trade unions were totally under the control of the SPD, having been illegal when the SPD was launched and formed as part of the party organization. This meant that when the SPD supported the war and its left broke away to form the USPD, the latter was virtually unable to reach workers organized in the unions.

The KAPD saw the new workers' and soldiers' councils as entirely distinct from the old trade unions and advocated that all socialists leave the old unions and join the new councils.

The KAPD found co-thinkers in many European countries and, as the original Western European Bureau of the Communist International (this was before the Third International was formally founded), was located in Amsterdam. The western European Secretary was Pannekoek and the Bureau, as many factions within its constituent parties, supported the KAPD transforming themselves into the Communist Workers' International (KAI). This was, until Trotsky founded an organization with the same name, the Fourth International. Pannekoek and the majority went on to become the Council Communists.

There was a short-lived Soviet government in Hungary In 1919 where, at the time, the Communists had no criticism of their Russian comrades. Later, after Stalin came to power, they were later regarded as ultra-left and all the exiled founders of the Hungarian Communist Party in Russia were purged.

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[32] The group that had formed round Rosa Luxemburg (although she had been killed by then).

Any surviving founder member who had been both lucky enough to escape Admiral Horthy's counter-revolution and to refrain from going to Russia was regarded as if (s)he were a KAPDist.

A Bulgarian Marxist group did retain an independent revolutionary reputation.

The KAPD/KAI, having started by objecting to the KPD's policy in subordinating German working class struggle to the Russian Government's, need to form alliances; became critical of the whole top-down policy-making that characterized Bolshevism and being critical of it, they had little patience when the Bolsheviks began purging rival soviet-supporting parties and dissident factions within their own party. They organized solidarity action in support of many of those purged.

Other critical supporters might smother their criticisms in public, so as not to embarrass a regime which they broadly supported but the KAPD decided early that the Bolsheviks had abandoned the road to socialism, had become state-capitalist and therefore, should not be supported. However, there was soon a division within the KAPD, between those who could still see a modified leadership-role for a revolutionary party and the majority, who saw the workers' council organization as all-sufficient. The latter current became the Council Communists.

One can argue that they differed from syndicalism in that they were more suspicious of organizations. They believed that any organization, union or otherwise, was bound in time to degenerate, either tending to reformism or to bureaucracy. They said that the only revolutionary organizations had to be workers' councils, that had only just been formed, but this was, at most, a difference of degree. Many syndicalists had warned of the dangers of degeneration and many councillists prolonged the life of their groups in much the way that syndicalists did.

They certainly also differed from syndicalism in that they put greater emphasis on organization by locality, whereas syndicalists stressed industry-wide organization but again, in practice, that too was a difference of degree rather than of kind. Moreover, at the same time as the workers' Councils were fighting in Germany, syndicalist workers in Northern Italy were also revolting, with their methods and organization hardly distinguishable from what was happening In Germany. The distinction between the two currents was therefore even further obscured.

Indeed, that there was also confusion between the two accounts for a division within the non-Councillist 'Ultra-Left'.

Bordiga, the Southern Italian founding leader of the Italian Communist Party was, like the KAPD, Luxemburgist rather than Leninist. He argued (against the North-Italian revolutionaries) a left-version of the Leninist case that only a vanguard party could guarantee that all the workers of a nation were ready to strike together and extended his argument to put the same case against the KAPD. He took his insistence on the need for an united (worldwide) party to the extent that, though he was supported by the majority of the Italian Party, when Lenin and Trotsky condemned him as ultra-left, he resigned the leadership and made way for their nominee Gramsci.

His faction, in consequence, remained in the Communist International until 1926 and when it finally became independent, it didn't even consider uniting with the KAI, whilst at the same time spurning any reconciliation with Trotsky, whom they regarded as having paved the way for Stalin.

By that time, Bordiga had more or less dropped out of active politics, only returning to activity after the fall of Mussolini. This has the result that the majority of those descended from his faction disown the label Bordigist, though this is still used by a small breakaway minority.

In Britain, Sylvia Pankhurst and the East London Suffragettes (as well as their supporters elsewhere) became successively the Women's Socialist Federation, the Workers' Socialist Federation (one of the groups trying to form the Third International) and the Communist Workers' Party.
The bulk of the party did eventually join the CPGB, who broke with Sylvia because she kept the paper, *The Workers' Dreadnought*, as her private paper. For a time, Pankhurst continued to support both the KAI and the Councillists, although she had dropped out of "Ultra-Left" politics by the mid-1920s.[33]

Various factions persisted, with the two most long-lived - the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation and the personal following of Guy Aldred[34] - briefly uniting in the late Twenties and early Thirties.

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[33] She was, however, still around the peace and anti-imperialist movements in the mid-1950s.

[34] Aldred's faction had been in the Communist Club and the Industrial Union Education League before 1917, had various names in the early 1920s and became the United Socialist Movement in the late 1930s (until Aldred died in the 1960s).

Neither ever completely renounced the concept of a party, so both could be characterized as being in either the KAPDist or the Councillist tradition. Arguably, one could also include the Socialist Propaganda League (though its members were never supporters of the Communist Party), a group that broke away from the SPGB in 1908 and survived in South London until the 1950s,

Though most of the German Councillists were killed between 1918-1924 and Pannekoek's Dutch support fell away, Councillism was revived as people rejected first Stalinism, and then Trotskyism. Subsequently, in the 1930s, various groups in Germany (the most well known was one round Korsch and Mattick) moved to and revived the Councillist position. The mere fact that they insist so much on spontaneity and that all groups degenerate if they survive too long, obviously makes it unlikely that a Councillist group will continue to argue its case for a long time. There would be an obvious contradiction.

A few small splinter factions[35] evolved into Councillists in the late 1930s, from Left splinters of Trotskyism. Then in the early-1940s, when the Trotskyist movement split on the class nature of the Soviet Union, various groups evolved in a more or less Councillist direction but they didn't (with the exception of a splinter from Socialisme ou Barbarie, which became the ICO and then Echanges et Mouvements) adopt the term. Socialisme ou Barbarie in France gave rise to the 1960s 'Solidarity' groups in Britain and the USA as well as the groups associated with CLR James, Raya Dunayevskaya and Grace Lee.

As Councillism was born, syndicalism was struggling in many places. In France, a large section (most would say the majority though this is disputed) of the CGT supported the war for a time whilst others failed to oppose it. At the end of the war, the majority of the CGT abandoned its anti-state position and became the industrial arm of the Socialist Party and most of those remaining voted to join the Red International of Labour Unions (the body set up by the Third International) forming the CGTU. The openly anarcho-syndicalist minority formed the CGT (SR). Sadly, this didn't last (I don't know why) and a smaller CNT became the French section of the syndicalist international (AIT)

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[35] Examples include a short lived group in Mexico known as The Eifellites (because of the height of their founder) and The Marlenites in the US.

However, a significant faction of the CGTU retained their syndicalist aims. They left the CGTU when Stalin took power and, for a time, collaborated with the Trotskyist left opposition, but as Trotsky insisted more and more on bolshevist organization, they reverted to being a syndicalist propagandist group.

A similar downturn was seen in the USA and in Australia. In America, Big Bill Haywood, who had been the most famous IWW organizer went over to help found the Communist Party and then went to Russia. He soon became disillusioned and long before Lenin died, was an early victim of purges. He had taken with him a large section of the union but from then on they got swallowed up in 'business unionism'.

The union did grow again - Larry Gambone has shown in a pamphlet that, in the early 1920s, the IWW achieved its largest membership, a fact which certainly surprised most syndicalists. But I don't think that even Larry would argue that it ever again achieved the reputation that it had had up until 1918.

In Russia, syndicalist organizations were suppressed. Not later, when the Stalinist state suppressed all residual workers' organizations, but in the early days of the revolution.

Syndicalism had had an influence throughout Latin America but again there were divisions - either the effect of the War or of the Russian Revolution – and frequently, the mass unions abandoned any orientation to anarchism, being replaced by new organizations. Notable amongst the new groupings was the FORA in the Argentine with the earlier CGT eventually taken over by the Peronists. In some other countries, other CGTs survived in others, FORA emerged.

In Ireland, Larkin and Connolly had launched the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, initially as the Irish section of the IWW. When it and, more importantly, its members' wives and children, were subjected to vicious boss-financed thuggery, a retired army officer, Captain Sean White (who had become an anarchist), went over to Dublin and launched the Irish Citizen's Army.

At about the same time, in response to the landing of a shipload of weapons, from Germany in Northern Ireland, the Home Rule party launched the Irish Volunteers.

When they split on the issue of support or opposition to World War I, they merged with the Citizen's Army to form the IRA, with the result being the Easter Rising. After Connolly's execution and Ireland becoming a Republic, the IT and GW became reformist and although a militant wing broke away to form the Workers' Union (which initially retained the IWW connection), it soon after moved to the communists.

Probably the least affected syndicalist organization was the SAC in Sweden, although even there reformist secessions first gave rise to, and then enlarged, a rival (socialist democrat) union organization. In Czechoslovakia, there had been syndicalist propagandist groups before WWI and after it, there was a large movement of predominantly Councillist origins, which was to be torn apart as groups decided whether to support the social democrats in their battles against the clerical fascists. I don't know, but presume, that this syndicalist remnant attracted others.

Goldman & Berkmann

Emma Goldman was a noted feminist & anarchist, who published *Mother* Earth. Biographers differ as to whether she was a feminist activist who, seeing that in capitalist society women were slaves of wage-slaves, realized that non-anarchist feminism would only remove one degree of servitude. Did she therefore become an anarchist or did she come direct to anarchism, only then deciding that her task was to concentrate on women's struggle?

Either way she was definitely independent minded. *Mother Earth* explored avenues that were neglected (even by feminist syndicalists) and when Leon Czoglosz[36] assassinated the President, causing other anarchists to disown him and his actions, she insisted that he was motivated by revolutionary ardour and therefore, whether or not the action was wise, he should be regarded as an anarchist hero. She erupted on to the stage, where Johann Most was busily denying that Czoglosz was an anarchist, and horse-whipped Most.

Probably the majority of modern biographers would assume that Emma was in the right, - even though few would argue that killing President McKinley served any useful purpose - and so Most's reputation is thereby sullied.

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[36] Czoglosz was widely suspected (by most anarchists who had met him) of being a police agent, as well as having an history of mental problems. This caused most anarchist groups to regard it as too dangerous to accept him into membership.

Her concern that someone should not be disowned because of his history of mental illness fits in with 'the personal is political', which rather worries me. It is after all obvious that the state (particularly the secret services and statist parties) are apt to use black propaganda to discredit all leftists. However, it is equally obvious that, where they can, state agents will persuade new and inexperienced recruits (let alone mentally disturbed ones) to engage in actions that do minimal damage to the state but can be used paint the Left in a bad light.

Berkmann was an interesting writer in his own right (*The ABC of Anarchism*) but was chiefly known for having tried to assassinate a thuggish manager who had persecuted workers in the aftermath of a strike.

Goldman and Berkmann were deported from the US after WWI (at the time of the Palmer Raids), as many syndicalists and others were arrested to be deported. At least one ship on which the deportees were put sank and it was believed it had been scuttled.

Goldman was one of the anarchists who, at that time, were prepared to put aside anarchist differences with Marxists – she rallied to support the Bolsheviks and, together with Berkmann, went to the Soviet Union. However, by the early 1920s, they were involved in solidarity actions defending Russian anarchists who had come in conflict with the State and once again moved into exile.

To gain a nationality she married a Scots anarchist, though most of the time she and Berkmann lived in the South of France (where the anarchist movement remained stronger than in Britain and where she had connections with the movement in Italy and in Spain). She lectured widely and wrote profusely, engaging in many aspects of anarchism, not just anarcha-feminism. She and Ethel Mannin sponsored a number of libertarian causes, building some influence on the fringe of the ILP. When the Spanish Civil War started, she played a notable role in launching Syndicalist International Aid and was able to bring to it people who would not normally have been involved in the anarchist movement.[37]

The Anarchist movement was very divided at the time and, with the impact of the Spanish Civil War, Emma set about working for a reunification.

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[37] One of whom was my Great Aunt Gwen, a fringe member of the Bloomsbury Group.

Unfortunately in retrospect, one can see that what appeared to be a major achievement (and certainly was a short-term gain) wasn't based on any real agreement, and probably in the long-term did more harm than good.

She contacted the (until then) apolitical son, of an Italian anarchist (who is mainly known as the creator of a pasta-making firm, Rheccione) creating a group around him, which was launched it as 'Revolt'[38], before subsequently building an Anarchist Federation around the group. In one of her letters she referred to uniting six rival papers, although I have little idea what these may have been and can only instance groups of which I've heard. Of those I know, not all can have taken part in the reunification.

Tom Keell had ousted Kropotkin from *Freedom* in 1916, then in 1919 retired to Whiteways from where he published quarterly. A group around George Cores and Ambrose Barker launched a rival *Freedom*, which by 1936 was about to merge with the Anti-Parliamentarian Federation and another Councillist group into Solidarity.

Guy Aldred published *The Word* (his group was known as the United Socialist Movement) but that joined neither the AFB nor Solidarity.[39]

McDougal, the main thinker of the APCF by that time, had been a comrade of Maclean's and had therefore started as an anti-parliamentarian Marxist. By the 1930s, however, he didn't mind whether he was called anarchist or Marxist. The unification of his group with the Freedom Group more than doubled its impact.

One other anarcho-Marxist Group existed but I have no idea whether or not it joined either the AFB or Solidarity. This was the Socialist Propaganda League and was a 1908 breakaway from the SPGB.

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[38] Revolt later became 'Spain and the World' and 'War Commentary'.

[39] Aldred and the USM had earlier split away from the Anti-Parliamentarian Communist Federation which joined Solidarity. Aldred had started as a Bakunian anarchist, active within the syndicalist movement but, in 1909, he founded a Communist Club, which in many ways had similar views to Lenin (though he was annoyed that Lenin refused to come to the Club, when visiting Glasgow before the war) and he argued that Lenin's views were Bakunian not Marxist.

When asked how SPGB Members of Parliament (when such were elected but not a majority) would act in parliament, the party had replied that they would vote on capitalist issues according to their merits, meaning that they would spontaneously defend workers existing standards but not campaign on partial issues. The founders of the SPL saw this as a surrender to reformism, so the breakaway faction turned anti-parliamentarian and moved into the anarchist orbit.

Tom Keell's partner, Lillian Woolf, published *The Voice of Labour* but I don't know whether that still survived. There had also been, just after WWI, the *Freewoman* (which I gather differed in position from Goldman's *Mother Earth*). I don't know if that survived until 1936 nor do I know whether it was the same paper published for a time by Kitty Lamb.

There was, I would assume, a number of regional papers and I know that Tom Brown published one such on Tyneside although presumably, Goldman would not have seen regional papers as a sign of disunity. Various Tolstoian (and other) communes would have put out occasional newsletters and no doubt there were attempts (as in the 1970 and 1980s) to bring out federal journals promoting the communal lifestyle.

Anyway, as a result, the vast majority of British anarchists united behind *Spain and the World* in the Anarchist Federation.[40]

During the war two groups left the AFB saying it was reformist – the Libertarian Anarchist Movement (LAM) left because the AFB didn't do enough to support deserters or to encourage people to desert, whist the Brotherhood Church left because the AFB failed to endorse a campaign for tax refusal.

The AFB had raised £5,000 for an £8,000 printing press, after Rheccione (pere) had left it £3,000 towards one but because of wartime rules, this was vested in the name of two trustees, Vero (Rheccione fils) and Dr John Hewittson. This allowed the split of 1944.

I must declare an interest at this point. I joined the Syndicalist Workers' Federation (the heir of the AFB) in 1960 and before that worked in alliance with it.

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[40] The various groups that had formed Solidarity stayed outside, as did Aldred's USM.

I thought very highly of Tom Brown as an anarchist propagandist and theorist, and almost as highly of Ken and Malcie Hawkes as indefatigable workers for the cause. So though when I joined it, I insisted that we ought to accept the situation and not challenge Vero's ill-gotten gains, I naturally sympathized with workers who had put their life's savings into buying a press, only to see it stolen.

One harmful effect (besides the obvious ones) was that the *Freedom* editors were worried that any organization, even one that they founded, might demand a say in the paper. So, an extreme anti-organizational stance was adopted, which was attributed to Malatesta.

People were told that if they were really anarchist they would know how to act and wouldn't need any organization, which was hardly conducive to the recruitment of new members. Also, it meant that there was no encouragement to supporters to play a role in wider struggles. As previously mentioned there many jazz musicians influenced by *Freedom*, but no proliferation of solidarity concerts to raise money for strikers, conscientious objectors et al.

Platformists

Russian and *a fortiori*, Ukranian, exiles were frequently dissatisfied, when they came West.

They thought Western European anarchist movements too disorganized and felt western anarchists lacked seriousness. The Ukranians for the most part came from peasant origins and so were generally Bakunian and were, like Bakunin, not averse to conspiratorial organization. They were not happy in countries where most anarchists were syndicalist and/or pacifist, still less with the fact that for many 'trendy' middle class youngsters, the word anarchist was an easy badge of supposed eccentricity (though more aptly conformity to a modern fashion).

Also, of course, some noted names had moved away from anarchism. Sorel, for instance, one of the major theorists of syndicalism had turned Monarchist (which then in France effectively meant he was to become fascist). Anatole France, who had been a sympathiser, rather than an active anarchist, had supported the war and so ceased to call himself anarchist.

Obviously Kropotkin had also supported the war while still advocating anarchism, he went back to and died in Russia but many of his disciples, while still advocating mutual aid, had qualified their views to allow them to support a state at war, and so had effectively moved to social democracy. Several noted Italian anarchists (including the husbands of the Rossetti sisters who had edited *The Torch* from their early teens) had turned fascist and as we have seen, Mussolini, though never an anarchist, had nevertheless been an admirer of Stirner.

There was a definite need to draw a clear distinction between anarchists who remained anarchist and those who had embraced right wing philosophies or who had moved to reformist politics. There may also have been a need to draw a line between serious anarchists and those who while remaining committed, took no practical part in anarchist activity.

They produced the Platform, a class analysis derived from Bakunin (which was not really appropriate to the conditions of industrialised countries) and a proposal for a general anarchist federation, which many other anarchists found uncomfortably close to a suggestion for a more or less Leninist party. All sorts of disadvantages ensued, whether or not the Platform was needful at the time. That said, the Platformists were, and still are, often amongst the most dedicated anarchists.

Obviously, the Platform polarized the movement, with those who feared that this was the thin edge of a vanguardist party wedge reacting. Some reacted more so than others and moved to a totally anti-organizational position.

Also within syndicalism, the Platform inspired a movement to recreate anarchist federations, which evolved unfortunately with members of the FAI (Spanish anarchists) taking upon themselves to purge reformist elements. There is doubt as to whether some of those purged were reformist and the purges meant that many workers stopped expressing themselves freely for fear that unwittingly they would express reformist ideas. This created a situation of 'leaders and led' within the unions and opened the door for FAI members to go into the government during the Civil War.

I am not artistic so should direct the reader to other authorities for both the Surrealists and the subsequent Situationists. I know very little of these groups other than there is much to say!

Nor do I know why surrealism gave way to situationism, although I have always assumed it was because Salvador Dali dropped anarchism when the Falange took power and became Franco's 'court painter'. In 1969, the Situationists made exaggerated claims to have been the only people to forecast the 1968 Paris Rising although I hadn't heard of them before 1968 so I don't know if they did. However, they certainly wouldn't have been the only people to make such predictions.

Gabriel Cohn Bendit used to come over to London and attend *Direct Action* editorial meetings. From 1962, I used to translate his and Daniel's stuff into English and he used to do mine into French. He predicted the rising, in considerable detail, at last three years before it happened.

Reich

Wilhelm Reich was by no means the only socialist psychologist to break with Freud, on the basis that it was absurd to equate sanity with fitting into society, when that society was fundamentally unhealthy, but his break went deeper than that of others.

Starting from a more or less orthodox communist position (in so far as a Freudian could be an orthodox communist) he was more concerned to understand the psychology of the horrors of fascism and then, when this took him off the party line and got him expelled, he looked at all forms of authoritarian politics.

He went on from there to develop the theory that all authoritarianism, and readiness to submit so to, stemmed from sexual repression or at least lack of sufficient orgasms. It was of course this theory that led on to the parts of his writings that became notorious, leaving him remembered as the crank of the orgone boxes and so forth (and which eventually got him prosecuted for indecent exposure). However, it stemmed from interesting insights and it is unfortunate that power society has been able to dismiss him because of this. Paradoxically, the libertarian Left occasionally looses support to people claiming to be post-Reichians, who claim (using the exact reverse of the reason Reich first broke with Freud) that one should not attempt to do anything about the ills of society, unless one has first tackled one's own psychological hang-ups.

The Frankfurt Group

The Frankfurt Group arose within Marxism and in the struggles against the Nazis. They rejected a purely economic understanding of Marx on the same basis that they rejected much of both Stalinism and Social Democracy, stressing the Hegelian philosophy and humanist origins of his theories. The politically active generally remember them as being led by Adorno, Marcuse and Fromm but others of the group were so well known in literary and other circles. Anyone trying to list their prominent members would be bound to leave themselves open to the accusation that they had left out the most important name of all.

Now they are generally seen as prototype-pioneers of socialist-humanist New Leftism but in the early 1950s, they were more or less disavowed alike by both Stalinist and reformist Marxists and, since they were non-vanguardists, dismissed by Trots. The only people who took an interest were anarchists and other libertarian socialists.

I am sure no anarchist is going to want to engage in a demarcation dispute with socialist humanists as to whether *X* or *Y* should be regarded as anarchist or socialist humanist or indeed, whether the whole corpus of the New Left might, under slightly different international circumstances, have been called anarchist rather than humanist Marxist. But we can justifiably say that in the dark days of the Cold War, the beliefs that are now called socialist-humanism were only explicitly professed by a very small minority of libertarian socialists who, jointly with anarchists and radical pacifists, then formed the Third Camp Movement.

Not all the Third Camp consisted of anarchists (even allowing for the fact that many libertarian socialists, socialist-environmentalists, Christian-socialists and radical pacifists who would now call themselves anarchist, green-anarchist, Christian-anarchist or anarcho-pacifist didn't then) but we were its principal strand.

The original 'Nouvelle Gauche' was initially a specifically Christian-socialist movement that arose in France, founded by young Catholics (who had been active in the Resistance) who were surprised to see both the Stalinists and the Guy Mollet Socialists ignoring the issues of poverty in the cities. They sought a new theoretical basis, allying first with a seal-libertarian faction of social-democracy round Claude Bourdet and they and Bourdet reached beyond to earlier dissident Marxist and anarchist currents.

When, after the death of Stalin, 'The Thaw' came in, there was also a renewed interest amongst Marxists in the writings of Gramsci and Lukacs, which, in turn, created a revival of studies of Rosa Luxemburg's thought.

This, after Hungary, produced much of the revolt within the Communist Party, leading to the secessions and forming the groups that later fused as the New Left. They took shape with a specifically Marxist character but even in the foundation of these, anarchists took a part and when, as a knock-on effect, that realignment gave rise to the formation of CND, it was largely built on the foundations of the earlier Third Camp.

Editors' Note

Laurens later added:

I am not certain but it could be that this needs to be completed by saying something about 1950s currents.

Some examples are:

Contemporary Issues: A group of Trotskyist origins, but with a more or less libertarian position.

The Bridge Circle and Social Integration: Both of which moved towards a reformist anarchism position from the SPGB.

The London Forum and Taena: Initially anarchist, Christian-communitarian groups, which moved away from the Left and then came back to radical pacifism. Even when they were Rightist they often introduced people to the New York Catholic Worker, then the largest circulation English-language anarchist paper.

The Progressive League: Particularly its Occupational Democracy sub-committee which, without openly professing anarchism, was involved in promoting libertarian education, psychology, etc and the introduction of collective contract schemes and other attempts at workers' control in industry.

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Camus's *The Rebel* had a widespread impact and although Dwight Macdonald's anarchism only lasted through the late-Forties, the impact of his paper *Politics* and book *The Root is Man* was, for a short time, enormous.

There were lots of anarchist individuals within pacifism and there was also a large overlap between the ILP & anarchism. Many of the ILP's members (although saying 'many' about the ILP's membership in the 1950s may be an exaggeration!) were more or less syndicalist with others being Tolstoian pacifists; some combined the two.

Common Wealth and the ILP both had unity talks with the AFB in 1946 and although they did not achieve organizational unity, the three were closely allied through the 1940s and 1950s.

Common Wealth had been formed by the remnants of the Popular Front, after the Stalinists had left to support the Stalin-Hitler Pact but then changed their mind again and became uncritical supporters of the war-time Churchill Government. Whilst it was a left reformist party at its foundation, it had illegal branches in the army and so its members were not totally constitutionalist. It had three splits with the end of the war and at each, just under half returned to the Labour Party, with the remnant moving in the opposite direction to become quasi-anarchist.

As I have said, I was asked by comrades new to anarchism to write something on anarchism's historical relationship to the wider left and therefore, more recent strands of anarchism are not discussed in this pamphlet, as that was not its original purpose. It is written not as a definitive version of events but as a 'jumping off point' for anyone interested in delving further into the history of our complex and diverse movement.

Laurens Otter
October 2007

For more of Laurens' work and articles from other members of the Wrekin Stop War collective; more details of our new venture, Wrekin Anarchist Group; to go on our mailing list and receive our quarterly newsletter; or to order more copies of this pamphlet/comment on its contents, please see our website www.wrekinstopwar.org or contact us at wrekinstopwaradmin@blueyonder.co.uk

Wrekin Anarchist Group Press 2007

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